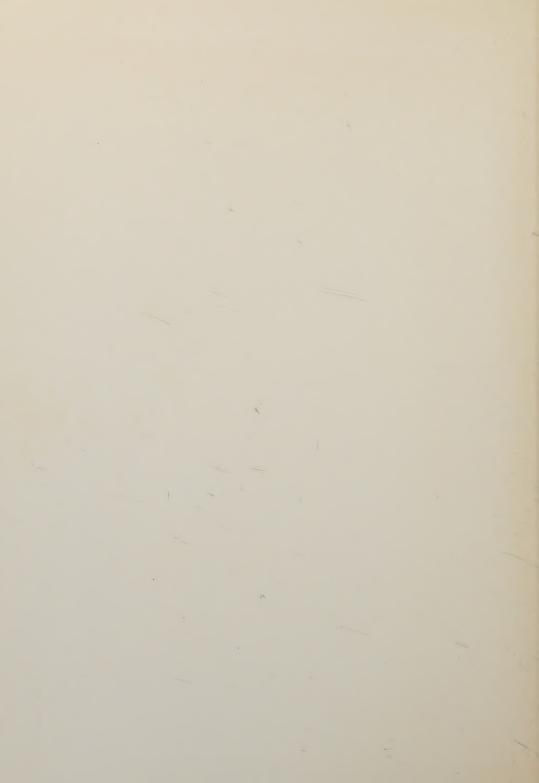
I&II Thessalonians

The Teacher's lutline Study

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations" Mt. 28:19



THE

TEACHERS

QUILINE & STUDY

2216.1

Digitized by the Internet Archive in 2022 with funding from Kahle/Austin Foundation

THE
TEACHER'S
OUTLINE & STUDY
BIBLE

PERCHERS STRING BURNESS

1 & 2 THESSALONIANS

THE TEACHER'S OUTLINE & STUDY BIBLE

NEW TESTAMENT

KING JAMES VERSION

Leadership Ministries Worldwide PO Box 21310 Chattanooga, TN 37424-0310

Copyright [©] 1994 by Alpha-Omega Ministries, Inc. All rights reserved throughout the world. No part of <u>The Teacher's Outline & Study Bible™</u> may be reproduced in any manner without written permission.

The Teacher's Outline & Study Bible™ is written for God's people to use both in their personal lives and in their teaching. Leadership Ministries Worldwide wants God's people to use The Teacher's Outline & Study Bible.™ The purpose of the copyright is to prevent the reproduction, misuse, and abuse of the material.

May our Lord bless us all as we live, preach, teach, and write for Him, fulfilling His great commission to live righteous and godly lives and to make disciples of all nations.

Please address all requests for information or permission to:

Leadership Ministries Worldwide
PO Box 21310
Chattanooga TN 37424-0310
Ph.# (423) 855-2181 FAX (423) 855-8616 E•Mail 74152,616@compuserve.org.
http://www.goshen.net/OutlineBible

HOW TO USE

THE TEACHER'S OUTLINE AND STUDY BIBLE (TOSB)

To gain maximum benefit, here is all you do. Follow these easy steps, using the sample outline below.

B. The Steps to Peace (Part II): Prayer & Positive Thinking, 4:6-9 1 STUDY TITLE 2 MAJOR POINTS 1. Peace comes through 6 Be careful prayer nothing; but in eva. The charge: Do not ery thing by pray-3 SUB-POINTS worry or be anxious er and supplicab. The remedy: Prayer tion with thanksgiving 4 COMMENTARY, OUES-1) About everything let your requests be TIONS, APPLICATION. 2) With requests made known ILLUSTRATIONS 3) With thanksgiving God. c. The promise: Peace 7 And the peace of (Follows Scripture) 1) Peace that passes God, which passeth all all understanding understanding, 2) Peace that keeps keep your hearts and 1. First: Read the Study Title minds through Christ our hearts & minds Jesus. two or three times so that 8 Finally, brethren, 2. Peace comes through the subject sinks in. positive thinking whatsoever things are 2. Then: Read the Study Title a. The charge: Think true, whatsoever and the Major Points (Pts.1,2,3) & practice things things are honest. together quickly. Do this whatsoever things are that are... 1) True iust. whatsoever several times and you will 2) Honest things are pure, quickly grasp the overall subject. 3) Just whatsoever things

than Step 2. Note how the points are beside the applicable verse, and simply state what the Scripture is saying—in Outline form.

3. Now: Read both the Major Points

and Sub-Points. Do this slower

4. Read the Commentary. As you read and re-read, pray that the Holy Spirit will bring to your attention exactly what you should study and teach. It's all there, outlined and fully developed, just waiting for you to study and teach.

4) Pure

are lovely.

what-

TEACHERS, PLEASE NOTE:

⇒ Cover the Scripture and the Major Points with your students. Drive the Scripture and Major Points into their hearts and minds.

(Please continue on next page)

- ⇒ Cover *only some of the commentary* with your students, not all (unless of course you have plenty of time). Cover only as much commentary as is needed to get the major points across.
- ⇒ Do NOT feel that you must...
 - · cover all the commentary under each point
 - share every illustration
 - ask all the questions

An abundance of commentary is given so you can find just what you need for...

- your own style of teaching
- your own emphasis
- · your own class needs

PLEASE NOTE: It is of utmost importance that you (and your study group) grasp the Scripture, the Study Title, and Major Points. It is this that the Holy Spirit will make alive to your heart and that you will more likely remember and use day by day.

MAJOR POINTS include:

APPLICATIONS:

Use these to show how the Scripture applies to everyday life.

ILLUSTRATIONS:

Simply a window that allows enough light in the lesson so a point can be more clearly seen. A suggestion: Do not just "read" through an illustration if the illustration is a story, but learn it and make it your own. Then give the illustration life by communicating it with excitement & energy.

OUESTIONS:

These are designed to stimulate thought and discussion.

A CLOSER LOOK:

In some of the studies, you will see a portion boxed in and entitled: "A Closer Look." This discussion will be a closer study on a particular point. It is generally too detailed for a Sunday School class session, but more adaptable for personal study or an indepth Bible Study class.

PERSONAL JOURNAL:

At the close of every lesson there is space for you to record brief thoughts regarding the impact of the lesson on your life. As you study through the Bible, you will find these comments invaluable as you look back upon them.

Now, may our wonderful Lord bless you mightily as you study and teach His Holy Word. And may our Lord grant you much fruit: many who will become greater servants and witnesses for Him.

REMEMBER!

The Teacher's Outline & Study Bible is the only study material that actually outlines the Bible verse by verse for you right beside the Scripture. As you accumulate the various books of The Teacher's Outline & Study Bible for your study and teaching, you will have the Bible outlined book by book, passage by passage, and verse by verse.

The outlines alone makes saving every book a must! (Also encourage your students, if you are teaching, to keep their student edition. They also have the unique verse by verse outline of Scripture in their version.)

Just think for a moment. Over the course of your life, you will have your very own personalized commentary of the Bible. No other book besides the Bible will mean as much to you because it will contain your insights, your struggles, your victories, and your recorded moments with the Lord.

"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim.2:15).

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim.3:16-17).

*** All direct quotes are followed by a Superscript Endnote number. The credit information for each Endnote is listed at the end of the individual study session for your reference.

MISCELLANEOUS ABBREVIATIONS

& = And

Bckgrd. = Background

Bc. = Because

Circ. = Circumstance

Concl. = Conclusion

Cp. = Compare

Ct. = Contrast

Dif. = Different

e.g. = For example

Et. = Eternal

Govt. = Government

Id. = Identity or Identification

Illust. = Illustration

K. = Kingdom, K. of God, K. of Heaven, etc.

No. = Number

N.T. = New Testament

O.T. = Old Testament

Pt. = Point

Quest. = Question

Rel. = Religion

Resp. = Responsibility

Rev. = Revelation

Rgt. = Righteousness

Thru = Through

V. = Verse

Vs. = Verses



Publisher & Distributor of...



DEDICATED:

To all the men and women of the world who study and teach the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and To the Mercy and Grace of God.

- & ————

Demonstrated to us in Christ Jesus our Lord.

"In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." (Eph. 1:7)

 Out of the mercy and grace of God His Word has flowed. Let every person know that God will have mercy upon him, forgiving and using him to fulfill His glorious plan of salvation.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." (John 3:16-17)

"For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." (1 Tim. 2:3-4)

& ----

The Teacher's Outline & Study Bible is written for God's people to use in their study and teaching of God's Holy Word.

LEADERSHIP MINISTRIES WORLDWIDE

OUR FIVEFOLD MISSION & PURPOSE:

- To share the Word of God with the world.
- To help the believer, both minister and layman alike, in his understanding, preaching, and teaching of God's Word.
- To do everything we possibly can to lead men, women, boys, and girls to give their hearts and lives to Jesus Christ and to secure the eternal life which He offers.
- To do all we can to minister to the needy of the world.
- To give Jesus Christ His proper place, the place which the Word gives Him. Therefore — No work of Leadership Ministries Worldwide will ever be personalized.

This material, like similar works, has come from imperfect man and is thus susceptible to human error. We are nevertheless grateful to God for both calling us and empowering us through His Holy Spirit to undertake this task. Because of His goodness and grace, *The Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible TM*- New Testament is complete in 14 volumes as well as the single volume of **The Minister's Handbook**.

God has given the strength and stamina to bring us this far. Our confidence is that, as we keep our eyes on Him and grounded in the undeniable truths of the Word, we will continue working through the Old Testament Volumes and on the new, forthcoming series (1995) *The Teacher's Outline & Study Bible.* Future materials will include CD-ROM, The Believer's *Outline Bible*, and similar *Outline* and **Handbook** materials.

To everyone, everywhere who preaches and teaches the Word, we offer this material firstly to Him in whose name we labor and serve, and for whose glory it has been produced.

Our daily prayer is that each volume will lead thousands, millions, yes even billions, into a better understanding of the Holy Scriptures and a fuller knowledge of Jesus Christ the incarnate Word, of whom the Scriptures so faithfully testify.

As you have purchased this volume, you will be pleased to know that a portion of the price you paid goes to underwrite providing similar volumes at affordable prices in other languages (Russian, Korean, Spanish and others yet to come) to a preacher, pastor, church leader, or Bible student somewhere around the world, who will present God's message with clarity, authority, and understanding beyond their own.

Amen

For ministry information, prices and shipping details, kindly contact:

Leadership
Ministries
Worldwide

P.O. Box 21310, 515 Airport Road, Suite 107 Chattanooga, TN 37424-0310 (615) 855-2181 FAX (615) 855-87616

CompuServe: 74152,616

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Every child of God is precious to the Lord and deeply loved. And every child as a servant of the Lord touches the lives of those who come in contact with him or his ministry. The writing ministry of the following servants have touched this work, and we are grateful that God brought their writings our way. We hereby acknowledge their ministry to us, being fully aware that there are so many others down through the years whose writings have touched our lives and who deserve mention, but the weaknesses of our minds have caused them to fade from memory. May our wonderful Lord continue to bless the ministry of these dear servants, and the ministry of us all as we diligently labor to reach the world for Christ and to meet the desperate needs of those who suffer so much.

THE GREEK SOURCES

- Expositor's Greek Testament, Edited by W. Robertson Nicoll. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans
 Publishing Co., 1970
- Robertson, A.T. Word Pictures in the New Testament. Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1930.
- 3. Thayer, Joseph Henry. <u>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament</u>. New York: American Book Co.
- 4. Vincent, Marvin R. Word Studies in the New Testament. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1969.
- Vine, W.E. <u>Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words</u>. Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Co.
- 6. Wuest, Kenneth S. Word Studies in the Greek New Testament. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1953.

THE REFERENCE WORKS

- 7. Cruden's Complete Concordance of the Old & New Testament. Philadelphia, PA: The John C. Winston Co., 1930.
- 8. Josephus' <u>Complete Works</u>. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1981.
- 9. Lockyer, Herbert, Series of Books, including his Books on All the Men. Women, Miracles, and Parables of the Bible. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.
- 10. Nave's Topical Bible. Nashville, TN: The Southewstern Co.
- 11. The Amplified New Testament. (Scripture Quotations are from the Amplified New Testament, Copyright 1954, 1958, 1987 by the Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.)

- 12. The Four Translation New Testament (Including King James, New American Standard, Williams New Testament In the Language of the People, Beck New Testament In the Language of Today.)
 Minneapolis, MN: World Wide Publications.
- 13. The New Compact Bible Dictionary, Edited by T. Alton Bryant. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1967.
- 14. The New Thompson Chain Reference Bible. Indianapolis, IN: B.B. Kirkbride Bible Co., 1964,

THE COMMENTARIES

- Barclay, William. <u>Daily Study Bible Series</u>. Philadelphia, PA: Westminister Press.
- 16. Bruce, F.F. <u>The Epistle to the Colossians</u>. Westwood, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1968.
- 17. Bruce, F.F. Epistle to the Hebrews. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964.
- 18. Bruce, F.F. <u>The Epistles of John</u>. Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1970.
- Criswell, W.A. <u>Expository Sermons on Revelation</u>. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1962-66.
- 20. Green, Oliver. <u>The Epistles of John</u>. Greenville, SC: The Gospel House, Inc., 1966.
- 21. Green, Oliver. The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews. Greenville, SC: The Gospel House, Inc., 1965.
- 22. Green, Oliver. The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to Timothy & Titus. Greenville, SC: The Gospel House, Inc., 1964.
- 23. Green, Oliver. The Revelation Verse by Verse Study. Greenville, SC: The Gospel House, Inc., 1963.
- 24. Henry, Matthew. <u>Commentary on the Whole Bible</u>. Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Co.
- 25. Hodge, Charles. Exposition on Romans & on Corinthians. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1972-1973.
- 26. Ladd, George Eldon. <u>A Commentary On the Revelation of John</u>. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1972-1973.
- 27. Leupold, H.C. <u>Exposition of Daniel</u>. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1969.

- 28. Newell, William R. <u>Hebrews, Verse by Verse</u>. Chicago, IL: Moody Press.
- 29. Strauss, Lehman. <u>Devotional Studies in Philippians</u>. Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers.
- 30. Strauss, Lehman. Colossians & Galatians. Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers.
- 31. Strauss, Lehman. The Book of the Revelation. Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers.
- 32. The New Testament & Wycliffe Bible Commentary, Edited by Charles F. Pfeiffer & Everett F. Harrison. New York: The Iverson Associates, 1971. Produced for Moody Monthly. Chicago Moody Press, 1962.
- 33. The Pulpit Commentary, Edited by H.D.M. Spence & Joseph S. Exell. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans's Publishing Co., 1950.
- Thomas, W.H. Griffith. <u>Hebrews. A Devotional Commentary</u>. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdman's Publishing Co., 1970.
- 35. Thomas, W.H. Griffith. <u>Studies in Colossians & Philemon</u>. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1973.
- 36. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdman's Publishing Co., Began in 1958.
- Walker, Thomas. Acts of the Apostles. Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1965.
- 38. Walvoord, John. <u>The Thessalonian Epistles</u>. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1973.

OTHER SOURCES

- 39. Barnhouse, Donald Grey. <u>Let Me Illustrate</u>. Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell Co., A Division of Baker Book House 1967.
- 40. Clairmont, Patsy. God Uses Cracked Pots. Pomona, CA: Focus on the Family Publishing, 1991.
- 41. Foster, Elon, Editor. 6,000 Sermon Illustrations. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1992.
- 42. Knight, Walter B. <u>Knight's Treasury of 2000 Illustrations</u>. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1963.

- 43. Knight, Walter B. <u>Three Thousand Illustrations for Christian Service</u>. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1947.
- 44. Larson, Craig B., Editor. <u>Illustrations for Preaching and Teaching</u>. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1993.
- 45. Morris, Leon. <u>The Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians</u>. "Tyndale New Testament Commentaries." Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, No date given.
- 46. Tan, Paul Lee. Encyclopedia of 7,700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times. Rockville, MD: Assurance Publishers, 1985.
- 47. Tillapaugh, Frank R.. <u>Unleashing the Church</u>. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1982.
- 48. Wiersbe, Warren W. <u>The Bible Exposition Commentary</u>, Vol.2. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1989.



Publisher & Distributor of...

The Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible

Materials Published & Distributed by LEADERSHIP MINISTRIES WORLDWIDE:

•	THE PREACHER'S OUTLINE & SE	MON BIBLETM_	NEW TESTAMENT
---	-----------------------------	--------------	---------------

Volume 1 St. Matthew I (chapters 1-15) each: \$ 32.95 plus s/h

Volume 2St. Matthew II (chapters 16-28)
Volume 3St. Mark

 Volume 4
 St. Luke

 Volume 5
 St. John

 Volume 6
 Acts

 Volume 7
 Romans

Volume 11 Hebrews - James (1 volume)

Volume 12 1,2 Peter, 1,2,3 John, Jude (1 volume)

Volume 13 Revelation

Volume 14 Master Outline & Subject Index

FULL SET -- 14 Volumes:

\$ 461.30 plus s/h

• THE PREACHER'S OUTLINE & SERMON BIBLETM— OLD TESTAMENT

Volume 1 Genesis I (chapters 1-11) each: \$ 32.95 plus s/h
Volume 2 Genesis II (chapters 12-50)

Volume 3 Exodus (Early 1996) - New volumes about every 6-8 months until completed.

volume 3 Exodus (Early 1770) - New volumes about every 0-0 months until completed.

- THE PREACHER'S OUTLINE & SERMON BIBLE™ Overseas English Soft-Set
 Church-to-Church for overseas missionaries & national preachers/teachers <u>Set</u>: \$299.25 plus s/h
- The Minister's Personal Handbook What the Bible Says...to the Minister
 12 Chapters 127 Subjects 400 Verses OUTLINED \$15.95 plus s/h
 - More than 400 verses from OT and NT dealing with God's minister and servant; all assembled in the unique Outline style. Features God's Word for His chosen and called servants who minister the Word.
- Translations of N.T. Volumes and Minister's Handbook: Limited Quantities

 Russian Spanish Korean Future: Asia Project (1996) & 6 others

 Contact us for specific Language and Prices —
- THE TEACHER'S OUTLINE & STUDY BIBLE New Testament \$13.95 plus s/h
 Average 17 lessons/book; 175 pages Verse Study Quantity Discounts Student book @ 2.90
- CD-ROM N.T. w/KJV, NIV, NASB (Windows/STEP) (2nd Qtr '96): \$399.95

All these great Volumes & Materials are also available at affordable prices to qualifying overseas preachers, evangelists, and church leaders by contacting:

LEADERSHIP MINISTRIES WORLDWIDE

or Your LMW Agent

PO Box 21310

Chattanooga, TN 37424-0310

(423) 855-2181 (8:30 - 5:00 ET) • FAX (423) 855-8616 (24 hrs)

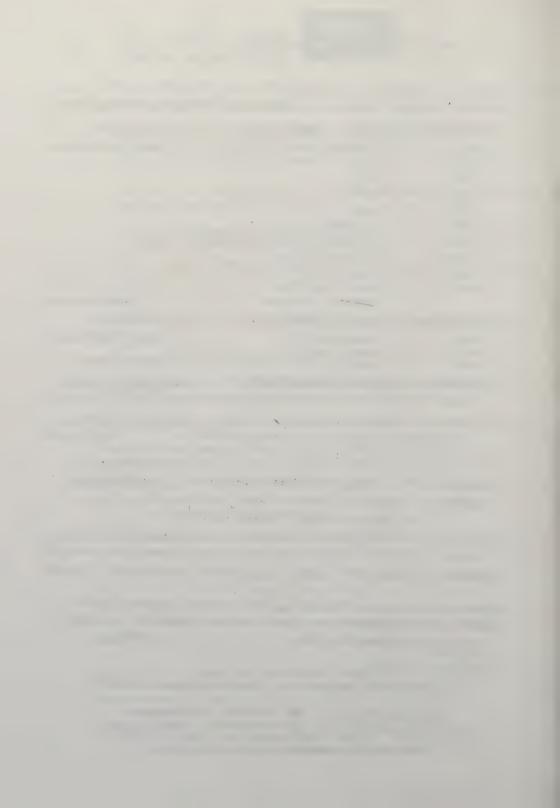
E-Mail 74152,616@ CompuServe.com. — http://www.goshen.net/OutlineBible

⁻ All Prices & Payments are: • US\$ • Plus S/H • For USA address -

[•] S/H, please add per volume (1.9 kg ea.): \$3.00 Standard (3 wks) — \$5.00 Xpres (7 bsn days) •

[•] Canada: \$6.00/vol. • Overseas: \$7.00/vol. sea mail (2-4 mos) • Need Quicker? FAX/Call •

PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE
 NO COD OR BILLING



66

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations

99 (Mt. 28:19)



THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

OUTLINE OF FIRST THESSALONIANS

THE TEACHER'S OUTLINE & STUDY BIBLE is unique. It differs from all other Study Bibles and Teaching Materials in that every Passage and Subject is outlined right beside the Scripture. When you choose any Subject below and turn to the reference, you have not only the Scripture, but you discover the Scripture and Subject already outlined for you-verse by verse.

For a quick example, choose one of the subjects below and turn over to the Scripture--you will find this to be a marvelous help for faster, easier, and more meaningful study of Scripture. In addition, every point of the Scripture and Subject is fully developed in a Commentary with these Unique Features: Personal Application, Illustrations, Questions, and much more! Again, this arrangement makes study preparation much easier and faster.

A suggestion: For the quickest overview of 1 Thessalonians, first read all the major titles (I, II, III, etc.), then come back and read the subtitles.

OUTLINE OF 1 THESSALONIANS		
		Page
INI	TRODUCTION TO 1 THESSALONIANS	13
I.	THE MODEL CHURCH, 1:1-3:13 A. The Model Church: A Strong Church or Work, 1:1-4 B. The Model Church: A Strong Conversion, 1:5-10 C. The Model Church: A Strong and True Minister, 2:1-12 D. The Model Church: A Strong People, 2:13-20 E. The Model Church: A Strong Faith, 3:1-10 F. The Model Church: A Strong Love, 3:11-13	15 25 34 45 55 63
п.	THE MODEL WALK OR LIFE, 4:1-12 A. A Walk that Pleases God (Part I): A Life of Purity, 4:1-8 B. A Walk that Pleases God (Part II): Four Practical Duties, 4:9-12	70 78
m.	THE COMING AGAIN OF JESUS CHRIST, 4:13-5:24 A. The Lord's Return and the Resurrection, 4:13-5:3 B. The Lord's Return and the Believer's Behavior, 5:4-11 C. The Lord's Return and Behavior in the Church, 5:12-28	85 95 102
SUI	BJECT INDEX	183
SCI	RIPTURE INDEX	197
пт	LISTRATION INDEX	203

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

INTRODUCTION

AUTHOR: Paul, the Apostle.

Paul's authorship is seldom questioned. Thessalonians is listed in the Marcion Canon (about A.D. 140) and referred to in the Muratorian Fragment. It is quoted by Irenaeus (about A.D. 180). (Leon Morris. *The Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians*. "Tyndale New Testament Commentaries," ed. by RVG Tasker. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1956, p.16.)

DATE: Probably A.D. 50-52. This date is fairly certain; Paul was in Corinth when he wrote the letter to the Thessalonians.

Luke says that Gallio was deputy of Achaia and that Paul was arrested in Corinth and brought before him (Acts 18:12). Just when Paul appeared before Gallio is not known. But an inscription at Delphi places Gallio's procounselship in the year of A.D. 51. Roman procounsels took office for only one year, beginning in early summer. Therefore, Gallio held office in A.D. 50-51 or A.D. 51-52. This would place Paul in Corinth in A.D. 50, and the writing of the letter between A.D. 50-52.

TO WHOM WRITTEN: "To the church of the Thessalonians" (1 Th.1:1). See Special Features, The Church.

PURPOSE: To encourage the church to stand fast against persecution.

Paul encourages the church by doing four things.

1. He commends their strong faith and love and hope (1 Th.1:3f).
2. He answers the malicious charges against himself (1 Th.2:1f).

3. He encourages the church to stand fast against persecution and to live holy lives Th 3:1-4:12).

4. He reinforces the great hope of the Lord's return and the resurrection of those who have already passed on (1 Th.4:13f).

SPECIAL FEATURES:

- 1. The City of Thessalonica. The great city was the capital and the largest city of Macedonia. (See Map--Introduction to Acts.) It had been founded by Cassander, the top military officer of Alexander the Great, after Alexander had died. Under the Romans the city had been made free because of its loyalty to Rome. As a free city it was allowed its own government and local laws, and at its height, the city reached a population of 200,000. The city had a natural harbor, but the primary factor contributing to the city's greatness was that it lay right on the Roman road, the Egnatian Way. In fact, the great road ran right through Thessalonica. It was the main street of the city, stretching all the way from the Adriatic Sea to the Middle East. Trade and commerce bristled with all the accompanying vice that follows such a metropolitan center.
- 2. The Church of Thessalonica. It was a great day when Paul walked into the city of Thessalonica bringing the news of the glorious gospel. Because of the city's strategic location and commercial importance, the gospel was bound to spread out beyond to the world rather rapidly. The great city of Thessalonica was the second great European city to be evangelized. Paul had just been evangelizing in Philippi when he entered Thessalonica. Paul preached in the synagogue for only three Sabbaths before he was forced by the Jews to leave the synagogue (Acts 17:2). Paul apparently moved into homes, preaching wherever he was allowed. He had so much success that the Jews eventually attacked and forced him to flee for his life. He took Silas and Timothy (Acts 17:10-14) and proceeded to Berea for a brief ministry. But the Jews pursued

him and he was forced to leave Berea for Athens (Acts 17:13f). However, he was able to leave Silas and Timothy behind to continue the ministry. While in Athens, he sent for Timothy, but dispatched him right back to Thessalonica (1 Th.3:2f). Paul himself went on to Corinth where he was soon joined by Silas and Timothy with good news from the Thessalonian church (Acts 18:5). His heart was so warmed by this report that he sat down and wrote the Thessalonian letter.

The converts were mainly Gentiles, including a large number of devout Greeks and prestigious women. Many, especially women, were sick of the immoral society of that day. They had turned to Judaism because of its moral teachings, yet they sensed the bondage of its legalistic thrust and rejection of its national prejudices. Therefore, their hearts were ripe for the message of liberty and love preached by the gospel. The church at Thessalonica...

• was founded on Paul's second missionary journey (Acts 17:1f).

• was revisited by Paul (1 Cor.16:5).

• included some Jews and a large number of Greeks and influential women (Acts 17:4; 2 Th.3:4, 7-8).

• did not support Paul. He worked at a secular job while there (1 Th.2:9); however,

he did receive financial help from the church at Philippi (Ph.416).

suffered persecution (1 Th.2:14).
was well organized (1 Th.5:12).

• had several prominent believers known by name: Jason (Acts 176), Gaius (Acts 19:29), Aristarchus (Acts 19:29; 20:4), and Secundus (Acts 20:4).

Thessalonians is "An Early Epistle Written by the Apostle Paul." It is one of the

earliest New Testament writings.

4. Thessalonians is "An Early Epistle that Proclaims Christ to be Lord" (1 Th.1:1, 3, 6, 10; 2:15; 3:8, 11-13; 4:1-2, 13-18; 5:1-2, 9-10, 23, 28; cp. Acts 17:7).

5. Thessalonians is "An Epistle that Proclaims the Doctrine of the Second Coming"

(1 Th.4:13f).

6. Thessalonians is "An Epistle of Great Encouragement for a Person Facing Persecution" (1 Th.1:6f; 2:2f; 2:14f; 3:3f).

7. Thessalonians is "An Epistle written to warn believers of the danger of sexual

impurity" (1 Th.4:1-10).

- 8. Thessalonians is "An Epistle written to charge believers with the most practical rules of behavior" (1 Th.5:12-22).
- 9. Thessalonians is "An Epistle with a Great Evangelistic and Missionary Challenge" (1 Th.1:8-12; 2:12-13; 3:12-13; 4:1-12; 5:1f).
- 10. Thessalonians is "An Epistle written from the heart and soul of a committed minister." Wycliffe Bible Commentary has a moving description of this point. (David A. Hubbard, First & Second Thessalonians. "The New Testament & Wycliffe Bible Commentary," ed. by Charles F. Pfeiffer and Everett F. Harrison. Produced for Moody Monthly by the Iversen Associates, N.Y., 1971, p.803f.)

"In these letters Paul lays bare not so much his subject as his soul: Here the beat of the apostle's warm heart is audible. He compares himself to a gentle nurse (1 Thess.2:7), a firm father (2:11), and a homeless orphan (in the Greek of 2:17). He shows himself ready to spend and be spent for the spreading of the Gospel. It is Paul, the man, who confronts us, gentle in his strength, loving in his exhortations, dauntless in his courage, guileless in his motives--a man (as Carl Sandburg said of Abraham Lincoln) 'of steel and velvet, hard as rock and soft as drifting fog.'"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

	I. THE MODEL CHURCH, 1:1- 3:13	God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. 2 We give thanks to God always for you all, making men-	sessing God's su- preme gifts: Grace & peace 5. It is a church that
	A. The Model Church: A Strong Work, 1:1-4	3 Remembering with- out ceasing your work	6. It is a church stirred up to work
1. It is a church that has ministers who are faithful to the	Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians which		b. Stirred by love
2. It is a church of the people3. It is a church founded	is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus	our Father; 4 Knowing, brethren beloved, your election	7. It is a church seen to be chosen by God

Section I THE MODEL CHURCH 1 Thessalonians 1:1-3:13

Study 1: THE MODEL CHURCH: A STRONG WORK

Text: 1 Thessalonians 1:1-4

Aim: To make one unwavering determination: To help build a strong church.

Memory Verse:

"Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father" (1 Thessalonians 1:3).

INTRODUCTION:

Have you ever been in a situation where you wished you had a camera? It could have been a breath-taking sunset at the end of a winter's day, or perhaps a loved one was doing something that had to be captured on film. As you stood there without your camera, the photographic moment was filed away in a special place in your mind called "Treasures in Teflon" (nothing sticks). Trying to explain what you had seen to someone else is simply hopeless. You have no picture to share the joy with them.

Fortunately for us, the introductory verses in this session give us a clear picture of a strong church. The picture painted in these verses is a model for all churches. It is the picture of a church strong in carrying on the work of the Lord. As we gather around this picture, what kinds of things will we see?

OUTLINE:

- 1. It is a church that has ministers who are faithful to the church (v.1).
- 2. It is a church of the people (v.1).
- 3. It is a church founded in God and in the Lord (v.1).

- 4. It is a church possessing God's supreme gifts: grace and peace (v.1).
- 5. It is a church that stirs prayer (v.2).6. It is a church stirred up to work (v.3).
- 7. It is a church seen to be chosen by God (v.4).

1. IT IS A CHURCH THAT HAS MINISTERS WHO ARE FAITHFUL TO THE CHURCH (v.1).

Note that Paul was not writing this letter alone. Silas and Timothy joined him in exhorting the church. Why is this an exhortation from three ministers? Because these particular ministers had been the three who had founded and ministered to the church throughout the early years of its ministry. Of course, Paul had been the head minister, but the other two had worked just as faithfully for the Lord in their call to be associates.

The point is this: the Thessalonica church was strong because its ministers had remained faithful to the church. From every indication, they had continued to stay in touch with the church and to exhort the believers through visits and letters as long as they were living and able to minister.

⇒ Paul visited the church when he returned to the area on his third missionary journey (Acts 20:1-2).

⇒ Timothy made a special visit to the church for the very purpose of helping the church through a difficult time and to establish and comfort the believers in their faith (1 Th.3:1-6).

⇒ All three ministers wrote the church at least two times, this letter of First Thessaloni-

ans and the second letter to the Thessalonians (1 Th.1:1; 2 Th.1:1).

APPLICATION:

How many churches lack strength because their ministers have not remained faithful in exhorting them...

• to follow on with the Lord?

• to follow and support their present ministers?

Note how Paul, probably the greatest minister who has ever lived, acknowledged Silas and Timothy as equal to him.

"And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:21-22).

QUESTIONS:

1. When you think about "a faithful minister," who comes to your mind? Why?

2. What kinds of things would prevent a minister from being faithful to the church?

3. How can you best support your minister? Are you making it possible for your minister to exhort you? How have you given him permission to be a part of your life?

2. IT IS A CHURCH OF THE PEOPLE (v.1).

Paul did not address the letter to "the church at Thessalonica," but to "the church of the Thessalonians." The church was the people, the people who had accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Without people who are committed to the Lord, there is no church. Note this fact as well: the letter was not addressed to a particular group of leaders but to all the people of the church.

Every believer was important, and it took every one of them to make up the church. A strong church is a church of the people, a church...

that is comprised of all the people.
that is built upon all the people.

• that acknowledges the importance of all the people.

that involves and uses the gifts of all the people.

• that recognizes and esteems the presence and contribution of all the people.

APPLICATION:

Several things will always weaken a church:

⇒ Building the church upon a few people or leaders.
 ⇒ Ignoring and neglecting the needs of some members.

⇒ Failing to involve and use the gifts of some members.

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph.4:11-13).

"For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another" (Ro.12:3-5).

ILLUSTRATION:

It is God's will that every member of a church participate in its ministry. Unfortunately, some have sought out the "good seats in the back" and watch the other members do all the work. Author Frank Tillapaugh points this out with the following story:

"At a Navigator conference years ago the main speaker referred to what he termed 'front-line' and 'rear-echelon' ministries. As a combat veteran he had vivid memories of the difference in attitude between those directly joined in battle on the front lines and those indirectly involved a few miles behind in the rear echelon.

"The guys on the front lines didn't complain much. They were too busy fighting the enemy. Camaraderie was built quickly. People had to work together; it was a matter of life and death. They took their objectives and strategy seriously—successful execution was imperative. Little things, such as how good the food tasted, didn't matter significantly. What did matter was that they were still alive to eat it.

"Once you went a few miles behind the front, however, attitudes changed drastically. Back there, griping was a way of life. Men complained about everything—the food, the

weather, the officers. Something was wrong with everyone and everything."1

In any church, there are all kinds of people...

some people on the front lines

some who will only participate reluctantly
some who stay in the back or on the sidelines

some who are in full retreat

A model church strives to get as many as possible on the front line. Where are you?

OUESTIONS:

1. On the average, 20% of the members of a church do 100% of the ministry. 80% are just spectators. Would you consider yourself to be a "participator" or a "spectator?" Why? What would your pastor say about your involvement in the church's ministry?

2. What kinds of things weaken a church? How are these weaknesses best resolved?

3. Are you comfortable with your commitment to the ministry of your local church? Why or why not?

4. Are you doing what you should for the church? Where are you coming up short? What steps do you need to take to begin doing what you should?

3. IT IS A CHURCH FOUNDED IN GOD AND IN THE LORD (v.1).

Note that Jesus Christ is said to be equal with God the Father. God is acknowledged as the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the distinctive belief upon which the church is built. We believe that....

"God so loved the world, that He gave His <u>only begotten Son</u>, that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life" (Jn.3:16).

⇒ We believe that God the Father sent His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, into the world to save us from perishing and to give us eternal life.

⇒ We believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

⇒ We believe that Jesus Christ is the Lord sent from heaven, that He is God, the eternal Son embodied in human flesh and sent to earth by God the Father.

⇒ We believe that Jesus Christ is Jesus the Carpenter from Nazareth.

⇒ We believe that Jesus Christ is the Christ, the Messiah and Savior who had been promised from the very beginning of history.

As stated, it is upon this confession that the church is built. This confession is the one distinctive mark of the church.

APPLICATION:

A church that is not founded upon God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ is not a church, not a true church, no matter what it may call itself. It is nothing more than...

- a man-created fellowship.
- a man-created gathering.a man-created assembly.
- a man-created assem
 a man-created body.
- a man-created meeting.
- a man-created worship.

"He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Mt.16:15-18).

"Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone [the Lord Jesus Christ], elect, precious: and

he that believeth on him shall not be confounded" (1 Pt.2:6).

ILLUSTRATION:

Only the church of Jesus Christ will stand when the storms of trouble come. An organization might look like a church, act like a church, and talk like a church; but if the foundation is faulty, it

will fall apart.

Years ago, a pastor decided to veer off course and build his own church kingdom. He had no trouble finding people to finance his ego as he attempted to build a ministry which he hoped would become internationally famous. When the decision was made to build a large sanctuary, he decided to forgo the skills of a professional building contractor in order to save funds. The decision was made to solicit volunteers from among church members.

By experience, we all know this: if we take unwise short cuts, we will always pay for them later. As time went by, his ministry began to crack at the seams. His lack of integrity caused him to self-destruct. Ironically, as his ministry was cracking, his beautiful building began to crack up

as well. In the center of the building, the floor cracked from one end to the other.

What kind of lesson can we draw from this example? A church and a Christian will crack if they are not trusting Christ. As the great hymn-writer Edward Mote reminds us...

"My hope is built on nothing less Than Jesus' blood and righteousness; I dare not trust the sweetest frame, But wholly lean on Jesus' name. On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand—All other ground is sinking sand, "All other ground is sinking sand."

OUESTIONS:

1. Is Jesus Christ the primary focus of your church? How do men replace the focus on Christ and put it on someone or something else? What safeguards are in place in your church in order to prevent this from happening?

2. What is the end result of a church or Christian believer if their efforts are not founded upon

Christ?

3. What characteristics can be noticed in a church that does not have the right foundation?

4. IT IS A CHURCH POSSESSING GOD'S SUPREME GIFTS: GRACE AND PEACE (v.1).

- 1. Grace means the undeserved favor and blessings of God. No church can be strong...
 - without the favor of God.
 - without the blessings of God.

When we see a strong church, the hand of God is immediately noticed: the hand that favors the church and blesses it. What is it that brings the hand of God's grace to a church? Note the exact wording of this verse:

"Grace be to you...from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

Grace comes from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. God pours His grace out upon the church that commits itself to the confession...

• that God is our Father.

• that Jesus is the Lord Jesus Christ.

The church that really commits itself to this confession is the church that God favors and blesses, that experiences the outpouring of His grace. Every strong church is a church that is confessing God to be the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ and confessing the Lord Jesus Christ to be

the only begotten Son of God. When this confession is forcefully made and demonstrated by a church, then it is that the grace (favor and blessings) of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ pours forth.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath be-

fore ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph.2:8-10).

"And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (1 Tim.1:14-15).

- 2. Peace means to be bound, joined, and woven together. It means to be assured, confident, and secure in the love and care of God. It means to sense and know that God will...
 - guide
 - provide
 - strengthensustain

- deliver
- encourageempower
- bless

But again, note that peace comes only from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. In order to have the peace of God and Christ, a church has to have a strong confession...

in God as the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ.

in Jesus as the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Father and Christ alone can bring peace to the hearts of men, and that peace can be given only to those who come to God for peace. The Father and Christ cannot give peace to a person who does not come to God for peace.

The point is this: a strong church is a body of people who know and experience the peace of

God as they walk throughout the world day by day.

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (Jn.14:27).

"But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us" (Eph.2:13-14).

OUESTIONS:

1. On what kind of church does God put His hand of blessing? Is your church that kind of church? Explain your answer.

2. For those who do not trust Christ, where do they attempt to find their peace?

3. How can your church improve its grasp of grace and peace? What is your role in this process?

5. IT IS A CHURCH THAT STIRS PRAYER (v.2).

This is a crucial trait, for God has ordained prayer to be the way He blesses and moves in behalf of people.

"And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Mt.21:22).

"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (Jn.15:7).

Why has God chosen prayer to be the channel through which He acts for man? Because sharing and talking together are the way all persons communicate, fellowship, and commune together. This is true both with men and God. Prayer requires our presence, sharing, and talking; and God wants to fellowship and commune with us. Few persons heed this fact; few persons take prayer seriously. Nevertheless a strong church encourages people to pray, and it stirs people to pray for it and its ministry. Note that Paul gave thanks to God always for the Thessalonian church.

ILLUSTRATION:

It has been said that God runs the world through those who pray. True as that is, many churches fail to pray. Sure, prayer is talked about in the pulpits and classrooms of the churches. But, how many churches practice what is being preached and taught? Listen to this striking example of why we are to pray:

"I felt so helpless, so powerless. I was watching my father die in the intensive care unit of the hospital and I could not do a thing." This is the testimony of a man who had just prayed for his father to recover from a massive heart attack. As he prayed for physical recovery, he also prayed for the spiritual condition of his father. With a weak voice, the father told the son that he was trusting Christ and would be in heaven if he were to die.

As the son waited for a report on the progress of the emergency by-pass surgery, questions filled his heart: "Lord, I'm a man of faith. But right now, my faith is so weak. I'm so frustrated. I wish I could physically pick my father up and help carry him across the finish line." During this healthy exchange between a man and His God, his heavenly Father spoke to his heart these words of comfort and encouragement: "The purpose of prayer is simply asking God to do what is impossible for you to do."

How simple, but so profound. Somehow, we have come to think that we can do some

of God's work without His help.

Four hours later, the doctor reported that his father was going to be stronger than ever. The son had nothing to do with that surgery. He could only wait and pray. And that is the secret: allowing God to do what only He can do.

OUESTIONS:

1. What things are easy for you to turn over to God in prayer? Why?

2. On the other hand, what things are the most difficult for you to release into God's care? Why?

3. Are you committed to turning things over that are beyond your control, or do you tend to take things right back?

6. IT IS A CHURCH STIRRED UP TO WORK (v.3).

Three things stir and arouse the church to work.

1. Faith stirs the church to work. When a person believes in Jesus Christ, truly believes, he is stirred to work and serve the Lord Jesus. The same is true with a body of believers, the church. The stronger the belief of the people in Christ, the stronger they will work for the Lord. A strong faith stirs, arouses, activates, and energizes believers to work to carry out the mission of Christ.

"For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" (1 Jn.5:4-5).

2. Love stirs the church to labor. The word "labor" means to toil; to labor to the point of exhaustion; to arduously labor. When a person truly loves Christ, he is prompted and driven to labor for Christ. Note: the believer who is driven by love is the believer who has really seen the love

of Christ. He is always conscious that Christ has taken his sins upon Himself, bearing the punishment for them. The believer knows that he is ever so short of the glory of God and that he deserves to be punished as the transgressor of God's law. But he knows and walks around with the deep sense that Christ bore his punishment for him. It is the wonderful love of Christ that stirs the believer to love Christ ever so much. Therefore, he does all he can to please Christ and to fulfil the joy of Christ. This is what Paul meant when he said "the love of Christ constrains me" to serve Him.

"For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one [Christ] died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again" (2 Cor.5:14-15).

"And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Heb.10:24-25).

- 3. Hope in the Lord Jesus Christ stirs the church to endure in its work and labor. The word "patience" means endurance, stedfastness, perseverance. Our hope is in the Lord Jesus Christ: we know He will...
 - guideprovide
- strengthensustain
- providedeliver
- bless

In addition, we know that the Lord is going to transfer us into heaven at the end of this life and reward us according to our labor here on earth. Therefore, strong believers and churches are driven to endure in hope—to continue on in their diligent labor for Christ.

APPLICATION:

There are several reasons why a man works.

- ⇒ There is forced labor: a man is forced to work.
- ⇒ There is a sense of duty: a man feels obligated to work.
- ⇒ There is the need to meet necessities: a man has needs that have to be met.
- ⇒ There is the wish to gain more: a man works to build wealth.

When a man accepts Christ, his motive for working changes. He now serves and works for Christ (Eph.6:5-9; Col.3:22-4:1). His faith in the new world Christ is creating stirs him to work for Christ. His love for Christ and for others stirs him to work in order to share the gospel with the world (1 Th.1:6-9). His hope in the return of Christ to set up His kingdom causes him to labor patiently (1 Th.1:3).

"Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Tit.2:12-13).

QUESTIONS:

- 1. What practical things stir individuals within a church to work? Are these things evident in your church? How can these things be cultivated in your church?
- 2. Do you think that church work should be "easy"? Why or why not?
- 3. What are the greatest challenges to a church's work?

7. IT IS A CHURCH SEEN TO BE CHOSEN BY GOD (v.4).

The word "election" means that the church has been selected and chosen by God. This means

two things.

Believers are elected and chosen by God to be His beloved people. God has called be-1. lievers out of the world. He was called then to turn away from the old life which the world offered, the old life of sin and death. He has called believers to be separated to the new life He offers, the new life of righteousness and eternity.

"The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee" (Jer.31:3).

Believers are elected and chosen to be beloved brothers. They are called to respect one another and to count one another as precious and deeply loved.

> "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (Jn.13:34-35).

APPLICATION:

Note two strong lessons.

1) The proof that a church is truly elected by God is that...

the members act like the beloved people of God. the members treat each other as beloved brothers.

2) A people can show that election is only a false profession...

by acting like they are not the beloved of God—living in sin and shame,

dirt and pollution, worldliness and greed.

by treating one another as anything but beloved brothers: being critical and divisive, prideful and arrogant, angry and hurtful, envious and prejudiced, superior and super-spiritual.

"Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied" (1 Pt.1:2).

"Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in

honour preferring one another" (Ro.12:10).

"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph.4:32).

ILLUSTRATION:

We cannot escape the wonderful truth that God chose us. Once He calls a person, life can never be the same again.

Cartoonist Hank Ketcham's Dennis the Menace was seen talking to his little buddy, Joey, about Cupid.

"And if he shoots you with an arrow, you fall in love whether you want to or not."

Well, God is certainly not cupid. But from a bow that strongly resembles a cross, the arrow of His grace has been shot right at humanity. In fact, His love is eternal and when it hits someone in the heart, the only possible response is to fall in love with Him.

Has His arrow pierced your heart?

OUESTIONS:

1. How can you know you are chosen by God?

2. How meaningful is God's election of you? To what can you compare this choice?

3. Has anything happened this past week that caused you to value your election? Explain your answer.

SUMMARY:

What does a strong church look like? From these Scriptures, you have been given a vivid picture.

1. It is a church that has ministers who are faithful to the church.

2. It is a church of the people.

- 3. It is a church founded in God and in the Lord.
- 4. It is a church possessing God's supreme gifts: grace and peace.
- 5. It is a church that stirs prayer.

6. It is a church stirred up to work.

7. It is a church seen to be chosen by God.

The only question that remains is this, "Can you be found in this picture?"

PERSONAL JOURNAL NOTES: (Reflection & Response)

- 1. The most important thing that I learned from this lesson was:
- 2. The area that I need to work on the most is:
- 3. I can apply this lesson to my life by:
- 4. Closing Statement of Commitment:

Frank R. Tillapaugh. *Unleashing the Church* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1982), p.122-123.

Note: the source of this thought is unknown. If it comes from some published material, please advise us; and we will give credit for it in future printings.

н		B. The Model Church:	8 For from you sounded	a. They sounded forth
Н		A True Conver-	out the word of the	the word them-
П		sion, 1:5-10	Lord not only in Ma-	
п			cedonia and Achaia,	301100
П			but also in every place	
1	l. They had ministers	5 For our gospel came	your faith to God-	was spread abroad
Н	who preached the	not unto you in	ward is spread a	was spread abroad
П		word only, but also	broad: so that we	
П	preached	in power, and in	need not to small	
П	a. Ministers who did			
П		the Holy Ghost, and	o Familiand	4 7970
ı	not preach just words		9 For they themselves	4. They turned to God
П	b. Ministers who	as ye know what man-	snew of us what	from idols
Ш		ner of men we were		
П	in the Holy Spirit and			
П	in much assurance	sake.	and how ye turned to	a. Turned to serve the
ı	c. Ministers who lived	6 And ye became	God from idols to	living God
н	what they preached	followers of us, and of	serve the living and	
2	2. They received the	the Lord, having re-	true God;	
П	Word (the gospel)	ceived the word in	10 And to wait for his	b. Turned to wait for
п	despite opposition &	much affliction, with	Son from heaven.	Christ's return
н	persecution	joy of the Holy Ghost:		
10	B. They became exam-	7 So that ye were		
110%	ples to other believ-	ensamples to all that		
	The state of the s			
	ers	believe in Macedonia	from the wrath to	
0	OMO Established	haliava in Macadonia	ltrom the wrath to	

Section I THE MODEL CHURCH 1 Thessalonians 1:1-3:13

THE MODEL CHURCH: A TRUE CONVERSION Study 2:

Text: 1 Thessalonians 1:5-10

Aim: To bear a strong testimony of a true conversion.

Memory Verse:

"And ve became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the

word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost" (1 Th.1:6).

INTRODUCTION:

Like a dress which is cut and sewn according to a pattern, so our lives are patterns-either good or bad--for others to follow. If someone patterned his life after you, what kind of life would be produced? The lines of our lives must be bold enough to see. The instructions on how to live as a Biblical Christian must be included in our pattern. It is very likely that you could be the only Bible that some people ever read.

The challenge before you is simply this: Will the pattern of your life produce a beautiful wardrobe of other Christians? Or will those who follow your example become embarrassing

"factory seconds" with visible flaws?

Paul says that the Thessalonian church was a pattern. He says that they were examples not only to the heathen, but also to believers. Their example is primarily found in their strong conversion and in their thundering forth the Word of the Lord (v.8).

OUTLINE:

They had ministers who preached the gospel as it should be preached (v.5).
 They received the Word (the gospel) despite opposition and persecution (v.6).

3. They became examples to other believers (v.7-8).

4. They turned to God from idols (v.9-10).

1. THEY HAD MINISTERS WHO PREACHED THE GOSPEL AS IT SHOULD BE PREACHED (v.5).

When Paul went to Thessalonica, he went for one purpose and for one purpose only: to

preach the gospel and to minister to the needs of people. Note three striking lessons.

1. Paul did not preach in word only; that is, he did not preach mere words, depending upon his own ability to influence people. He did not stand before people using nothing but his own words to reach people. His preaching was not dependent upon...

his eloquence

his novel ideas

his ability

his charisma

his wisdom

his appearance

When Paul stood before people and preached, he was not concerned with words and eloquence, nor with whether or not people thought he was a good preacher. He was concerned with only one thing: sharing the Word of God and the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul knew that God honored His Word and His Word only.

"And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the <u>testimony of God</u>. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Cor.2:1-2).

2. Paul preached in power, in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance.

a. Preaching in power means preaching in the power and energy of God Himself. This is what is so often missed and misunderstood. The gospel is not mere words nor just sharing an idea. Words and ideas are, of course, involved; but the gospel is more, much more. The gospel is the power of God at work in the human heart. The gospel is the power of God operating, working, stirring, convicting, and energizing a person to believe and accept the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the reason it is so important for the preacher to be completely surrendered to God—living ever so close to Him—living and moving and having his being in the Lord. The preacher must be under the control of God so that the power of God can rest upon and flow through his life. The preacher must become nothing but an instrument in the hands of God. Then and only then can the gospel—the very

power of God—flow through his preaching like it should.

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

b. *Preaching in the Holy Spirit* means that the Holy Spirit was also working in the hearts of people. He was doing what God had sent Him to earth to do: convict the hearts of the hearers and convince them of the truth of the gospel:

⇒ that Jesus Christ did die for their sins.

⇒ that Jesus Christ does provide righteousness for men; that His righteousness does stand for the righteousness of men.

⇒ that Jesus Christ did bear the judgment and punishment of sin for men.

"And when he [the Holy Spirit] is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment [all borne by Christ]: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged" (Jn.16:8-11).

- c. *Preaching in assurance* is a critical point. How can a minister preach and have the assurance that his preaching will bear fruit? How can he be assured that the power of God and of the Holy Spirit will rest upon his preaching? The answer is found in what is said in the following point, point three.
- 3. Paul lived what he preached. He lived a life that was completely surrendered to Christ. He lived and moved and had his being in Christ, walking and living ever so close to Him. Assurance and confidence come from obedience—knowing that we are doing what we should be doing. It comes from knowing that we please God—that we are living pure and clean lives, praying and studying God's Word every day and witnessing to the saving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. When we know that we are pleasing God, then we know that His presence and power will be upon us.

⇒ Obedience is the secret to assurance.

⇒ Obedience is the secret to the presence and power of God upon our lives and

preaching.

⇒ Obedience is the secret to bearing fruit through preaching. This was the secret of Paul. Paul obeyed God; therefore, Paul was convinced that his preaching would be in power and in the Holy Spirit.

APPLICATION 1:

The world has yet to see what God will do with a man who obeys Him—totally and completely obeys Him—obeys Him...

• by living a pure and clean life.

• by praying and studying God's Word every day.

• by witnessing and sharing the saving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Lk.9:23).

APPLICATION 2:

The point is this: the Thessalonians had a preacher who preached the gospel as it should be preached. They had a minister who surrendered his life totally to Christ: he lived and preached Christ and Christ alone. What a dynamic example for us! When we live and preach like we should, then our preaching will be in power and in the Holy Spirit. The presence and power of God Himself will rest upon our lives and ministries.

ILLUSTRATION:

Paul was committed to preach the gospel and to minister to the practical needs of people. Listen to this contemporary example as told by Ralph Neighbor:

"Jack had been president of a large corporation, and when he got cancer, [the company] ruthlessly dumped him. He went through his insurance, used his life savings, and had practically nothing left.

"I visited him with one of my deacons, who said, 'Jack, you speak so openly about the brief life you have left. I wonder if you've prepared for your life after

death?'

"Jack stood up, livid with rage. 'You----Christians. All you ever think about is what's going to happen to me after I die. If your God is so great, why doesn't he do something about the real problems of life?' He went on to tell us he was leaving his wife penniless and his daughter without money for college. Then he ordered us out.

"Later my deacon insisted we go back. We did.

"'Jack, I know I offended you,' he said. 'I humbly apologize. But I want you to know I've been working since then. Your first problem is where your family will live after you die. A realtor in our church has agreed to sell your house and give your wife his commission.

"'I guarantee you that, if you'll permit us, some other men and I will make the

house payments until it's sold.

"Then, I've contacted the owner of an apartment house down the street. He's offered your wife a three-bedroom apartment plus free utilities and an \$850-a-month salary in return for her collecting rents and supervising plumbing and electrical repairs. The income from your house should pay for your daughter's college. I just wanted you to know your family will be cared for.'

"Jack cried like a baby.

"He died shortly thereafter, so wrapped in pain he never accepted Christ. But he experienced God's love even while rejecting him. And his widow, touched by the caring Christians, responded to the gospel message."

Paul lived out the gospel in his everyday life...through the power of the Holy Spirit. His lifestyle, carried out in boldness and assurance, was an example to believers and unbelievers alike. Do you live out the gospel in your life?

OUESTIONS:

1. What practical things can you do in order preach and share the gospel, that is, to minister to people who have desperate needs?

2. What qualities did Paul's preaching possess? Which of these qualities do you need

in your life in order to be a greater testimony and witness for Christ?

3. What results does your lifestyle (your preaching, teaching, witnessing, etc.) have on others? How can you guarantee that your lifestyle will bear fruit? What adjustments do you need to make in your life in order to be more fruitful?

2. THEY RECEIVED THE WORD (THE GOSPEL) DESPITE OPPOSITION AND PERSECUTION (v.6).

Remember: unbelieving Jews had opposed Paul and aroused some of the city troublemakers against him. The persecution became so threatening that Paul had been forced to flee the city (cp. Acts 17:4-10). However, his absence did not stop the persecution. In fact, it seems that the attack upon the church and its young believers became even more fierce. The Jews had con-

vinced some of the Gentile citizens—some countrymen of the believers—to join them in trying to stop the gospel and destroy the church (cp. 1 Th.2:14). But note what Paul says:

⇒ The gospel still bore fruit. Some persons still received the Word and accepted

Christ despite the opposition and persecution.

"And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Mt.10:28).

The Holy Spirit rewarded the believers' commitment to Christ. He stirred joy in their hearts and lives, giving them full assurance of their eternal salvation and deliverance from death.

"Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Pt.1:8).

One other fact is important: the believers became followers of Paul and Christ. The word follow means to imitate. Is it right for people to imitate and follow preachers and other outstanding Christian leaders? A.T. Robertson gives an excellent answer to the question:

"It is a daring thing to expect people to 'imitate' the preacher, but Paul adds 'and of the Lord,' for he only expected or desired 'imitation' as he himself imitated the Lord Jesus, as he expressly says in 1 Cor. 11:1. The peril of it all is that people so easily and so readily imitate the preacher when he does not imitate the Lord."

"Be ve followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Cor.11:1).

APPLICATION:

There are two striking lessons in this point.

1. Nothing, absolutely nothing, should keep a person from receiving the Word of the gospel—

not even opposition and persecution.

2. Believers—preachers and laymen alike—must guard their lives closely and make sure they are living ever so diligently for Christ. Why? Because others are watching and following us some child, some adult, some neighbor, some friend. There are people who look up to us and follow us. Whether or not we like the fact, they are. Therefore, it behooves us to follow Christ as perfectly as we can.

"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him" (Col.2:6).

OUESTIONS:

1. What fears do you struggle with as you share the gospel with the lost? How can you overcome these fears?

2. Can you recall a specific time when you were persecuted for your faith? How did you re-

spond? What would you do differently the next time? 3. Why is it important for you to live for Christ as perfectly as you can? Are you satisfied with your current testimony? Could you do more for Christ?4. If someone acted 'just like you,' would it be pleasing to the Lord? Why or why not?

3. THEY BECAME EXAMPLES TO OTHER BELIEVERS (v.7-8).

This is a striking point: this young church was so committed to the Lord that their testimony spread all over the world. Note this: when Rome had conquered Greece, it had divided the country into two provinces, the northern province being Macedonia and the southern province being Achaia. Paul clearly says that the testimony of the church had spread all over Greece, both northern Greece and southern Greece. Then he adds that their faith had spread out beyond the borders of Greece. This must mean all over the world, for Thessalonica was a major commercial center where salesmen, tradesmen, and businessmen visited from all over the world. Just imagine the witnessing that the church and its believers must have been doing day by day. Their excitement and enthusiasm for Christ and the opposition and persecution against them must have been the talk of the city and world.

APPLICATION 1:

What a glorious testimony and dynamic example of witnessing! What a lesson for us today! How desperately we need to get to the task of living for Christ and being a testimony for Him.

"For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20).

APPLICATION 2:

By definition, the church should be a place where the lost want to be because of the reality of God. Oh, that the words of the prophet Zechariah could be our testimony:

"Thus says the Lord of hosts, In those days ten men from the nations of every language will grasp the garment of a Jew saying, Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you" (Zech.8:23, NASB).

OUESTIONS:

- 1. Do you ever experience feelings of failure in your testimony and witness for Christ? What can you do to cultivate a positive witness?
- 2. How can you guard against compromising your witness, your example?
- 3. What is the relationship between what you say and what you do?
- 4. Do you think your church's ministry meets the needs of the unchurched and the lost? What kinds of changes need to be made to reach the lost and unchurched of your community?

4. THEY TURNED TO GOD FROM IDOLS (v.9-10).

Remember that Paul had been forced to flee from Thessalonica for his life. The only way he knew how the young church and its believers were holding up was from others who had been to Thessalonica to visit or conduct business. What he heard thrilled his heart: the believers were standing fast in the gospel he had preached. There were three things in particular that struck him about their testimony.

1. The believers had turned to God from idols. Note the importance of this point: they

turned to God from idols, not from idols to God.3

⇒ They did not seek to clean up their lives by themselves. They did not try to reform themselves by turning away from idols and then turning to God.

⇒ They turned to God first, then with God's help and strength, they repented and turned away from idols.

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38).

What is an idol? It is crucial to understand exactly what an idol is. Very simply, every man has an idea of what God is like and what God allows and does not allow. Some men take their ideas and make images of them by carving wood or melting and molding metal or porcelain. Other men just hold the images in their mind and picture God as being like this or like that. Either image is as much an idol as the other. An idol is merely an image of some god created by the mind of man—an image other than the God revealed by the Scripture (cp. Ro.1:21).

Note the sharp contrast made between these images of man's mind and God: God is the living

and true God; the images are only the lifeless and false notions of men.

"Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things" (Ro.1:21-23).

2. The believers had turned to God because of the promise of Christ's return. It was God's Son who was returning to earth, the Person who had died for them so that they might be acceptable to God and live with Him forever. They believed with all their hearts that they were to live with God forever. This was the reason they were waiting for the return of Christ. The word wait is in the present tense. This means that their hope for the return of Christ was alive. They expected Christ to return at any moment and eagerly looked for Him to rent (break through) the skies. Their expectation was a daily expectation.

"Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Mt.24:44).

Note one other significant fact. How do we know that Christ is going to return to earth and take believers to live with God forever? Because God raised up Christ from the dead. By resurrecting Christ, God...

proved that He is the God of all power.

• proved that He has the power to raise the dead.

• proved that He is going to do just as Christ taught: raise all men, some to eternal life and some to eternal death, that is, to be eternally separated from God.

"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (Jn.5:28-29).

3. The believers had turned to God to escape the wrath of God. Note this: a day of wrath is coming; it has to come, for man and his universe are corruptible and imperfect and are in rebellion against God. The world is already condemned; the day of wrath is already set. But this is the glorious news of the gospel: we can be delivered from the wrath to come. The word delivered means to rescue; to deliver us right out of the wrath. The picture is that of God rescuing and lifting us up out of the wrath.

"He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (Jn.3:18).

ILLUSTRATION:

Have you ever thought about how you formed a picture of God, a view of what He is like? Often, we tend to desire a god we want instead of seeking the only living and true God. Do you have a story similar to Allen's?

Like many of us, Allen wanted God to see things his way. Allen was raised in a Christian home, but allowed different things to become idols throughout his life. Sports heroes, the pursuit of material possessions, fame, and self-seeking adventures took the top spot in his heart. One day, life came crashing down on Allen. His marriage was on the edge of ruin. His children were out of control. His career was heading nowhere fast. Trouble flooded in upon him.

Coming to a place called "Wits End," a place where God meets us at the end of our rope, Allen began to seek help. While attending a marriage conference, Allen was desperate enough to seek the only living and true God. During the final day of the conference, Allen noticed a wooden cross that had several nails hammered into it by others who were just as desperate as he was. A simple sign over the cross

read: "Jesus invites you to nail every sin to His cross."

With tears rolling down his cheek, Allen found a nail lying on the ground by the cross. He thought to himself, "I'll just take this nail and put it in my pocket and keep it as a memento." After a moment, he sensed an immediate impression in his heart that compelled him to walk up and put his nail in the cross. As he did, he felt all the hurt, the weight of having lived a life of sin, fall off his shoulders.

"Jesus, I've lived my life for myself. I can't do this alone. Please give me the strength to live for you." After praying, Allen took a deep breath and walked away

from the cross that held his sins, every one of them.

Have you turned from God to idols? If so, it is time to nail the idols to the cross and turn back to God.

OUESTIONS:

1. What is an idol? Do Christian believers ever have idols? What kinds?

2. What causes people to turn to idols from God? What can cause a person to turn back to God from idols?

3. What assurance does the believer have that he will live with Christ forever?

SUMMARY:

Your life is to reflect a strong conversion. As others look to you for an example, continue to challenge yourself with the strong example of the Thessalonian church:

1. They had ministers who preached the gospel as it should be preached.

2. They received the Word (the gospel) despite opposition and persecution.

3. They became examples to other believers.

4. They turned to God from idols.

PERSONAL JOURNAL NOTES: (Reflection & Response)

1. The most important thing that I learned from this lesson was:

2.	The	area	that	I need to	work	on +1	ha	
400	1110	auca	uiai	н неси п	1 WOTE	on H	ne most	101

3. I can apply this lesson to my life by:

4. Closing Statement Of Commitment:

A.T. Robertson. Word Pictures in the New Testament, Vol.4 (Nashville, TN: Broadman

Press, 1931), p.11.

2

As told by Ralph Neighbor from the book *Death and the Caring Community*, by Larry Richards and Paul Johnson. Craig B. Larson, Editor. *Illustrations for Preaching & Teaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1993), p.68-69.

John Walvoord. The Thessalonian Epistles (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1973), p.17.

1	CHAPTER 2	been burdensome, as	
		the apostles of Christ.	
	C. The Model Church:	7 But we were gentle	7. He preaches gently
	A Strong & True	among you, even as a	
	Minister, 2:1-12	nurse cherisheth her	a. As a mother
	1411113101, 211 12	children:	b. As giving his own
1. He has a full & fruit-	For yourselves broth	8 So being affection-	soul
ful ministry—not an		ately desirous of you,	3041
	len, know our en-	we were willing to	
empty & fruitless	trance in unto you,	we were willing to	
ministry		have imparted unto	
2. He preaches boldly	2 But even after that	you, not the gospel of	
a. In great trials, even	we had suffered before,	God only, but also our	
imprisonment	and were shamefully	own souls, because ye were dear unto us.	
b. In facing opposi-	entreated, as ye know,	were dear unto us.	
tion	at Philippi, we were	9 For ye remember,	8. He preaches, labor-
	bold in our God to	brethren, our labour	ing night & day
	speak unto you the	and travail: for labour-	a. With great labor &
		ing night and day, be-	hardship
		cause we would not be	b. With no charge
3. He preaches a pure		chargeable unto any of	
gospel, lives a clean	was not of deceit, nor	you, we preached unto	
life, & does not de-	of uncleanness, nor in	you the gospel of God.	
ceive people	guile:	10 Ye are witnesses,	9. He preaches with a
4. He preaches to please		and God also, how	clean life, an impec-
God, not men		holily and justly and	cable life
	put in trust with the	unblameably we be-	
	gospel, even so we		
**************************************	speak; not as pleasing		
*")	men, but God, which	lieve:	
		11 As ye know how	10. He preaches as a fa-
5. He does not preach		we exhorted and com-	ther—tenderly giv-
for what he can get	time used we flattering	forted and charged	ing direction
out of it	words as ve know	every one of you, as a	ing un ection
a. Does not use flat-	nor a cloke of covet-	father doth his chil-	
tery	ousness; God is wit-		
b. Is not covetous	ness:		11.He preaches with
6. He does not preach		walk worthy of God,	one objective—
for glory nor for	we glory neither of	who hath called you	edification
prestige, authority,		unto his kingdom and	edification
or position			
or hosition	when we might have	giory.	

Section I THE MODEL CHURCH 1 Thessalonians 1:1-3:13

Study 3: THE MODEL CHURCH: A STRONG AND TRUE MINISTER

Text: 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12

Aim: To understand and appreciate the great call and work of your minister.

Memory Verse:

"Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe" (1 Th.2:10).

INTRODUCTION:

When you are sick and have to go to the doctor, there is only one piece of paper in his office that interests you: his degree. Your interest is not the selection of magazines and brochures lying on tables in his waiting room but in his degree. It is this piece of paper that authenticates his abil-

ity to give you the care you need.

Your doctor did not just wake up one day and become a doctor. He had to go through years of school and training at a great personal sacrifice. All of this was done with people just like you in mind. Your doctor would be of no help to you without that piece of paper. On the other hand, those who practice medicine without a license or a degree are known as "quacks" and will do more harm than good. Unwilling to pay the price, they settle for shortcuts at the expense of their patients.

If you want to avoid being a spiritual quack, Paul itemizes eleven things that the Christian believer needs to do. In a world sick with sin, there is a great shortage of qualified spiritual doctors. If you are willing to build your practice, this session will help you pass your spiritual exams.

Remember the church at Thessalonica was under heavy persecution. The Jewish religionists had risen up against Paul and the church and were set on destroying both. They enlisted all the Gentile citizens they could to join their attack. They convinced the people that the preaching of Christ would destroy their freedom and affect their jobs and businesses. The persecution became so violent that Paul was forced to flee for his life. However, his absence did not stop the persecution. The attacks against the church and its believers continued. One form which the persecution took was to destroy the reputation of Paul. Accusation after accusation was leveled against Paul, and rumor after rumor was spread about him.

Paul's purpose in writing this passage was to strengthen and build up the believers in Christ. To do so, he had to answer and correct the charges against him. Paul knew how easily people are influenced by charges and rumors and how easily they become exaggerated. He wanted no question and no misunderstanding about him and the ministry of Christ. He was a minister of Christ, a true minister, and the gospel of Christ was true. This meant that the faith of the believers was valid. They were truly saved and made acceptable to God by the death of Christ, and they were going to live eternally in God's kingdom and glory (v.12). The point is this: this passage gives us the picture of a strong minister—the kind of minister and servant of Christ that every believer should really be.

This passage shows the charges being leveled against Paul by those who were trying to destroy

his reputation.

OUTLINE:

1. He has a full and fruitful ministry—not vain and fruitless (v.1).

2. He preaches boldly (v.2).

3. He preaches a pure gospel, lives a clean life, and does not deceive people (v.3).

4. He preaches to please God, not men (v.4).

5. He does not preach for what he can get out of it (v.5).

6. He does not preach for glory nor for prestige, authority, or position (v.6).

7. He preaches gently and lovingly (v.7-8). 8. He preaches, laboring night and day (v.9).

9. He preaches with a clean life, an impeccable life (v.10). 10. He preaches as a father—tenderly giving direction (v.11).

11. He preaches with one objective—edification (v.12).

1. HE HAS A FULL AND FRUITFUL MINISTRY—NOT AN EMPTY AND FRUITLESS MINISTRY (v.1).

The word vain means empty, ineffective, and fruitless. Paul reminds the believers that his ministry among them was not an empty and fruitless ministry. People had been ministered to and some had even accepted Christ and experienced a genuine conversion. They were now living for Christ—living for Him through the most difficult of times, even persecution. Therefore, the charge that his ministry was empty and fruitless was false. God had His hand upon him, and God was blessing his ministry.

OUESTIONS:

- 1. What are some practical ways you can minister to others? In what ways does this bear fruit?
- 2. What traits are evident in a fruitful ministry?
- 3. What are some traits of fruitless ministry?

2. HE PREACHES BOLDLY (v.2).

The strong minister preaches boldly even when there is opposition. Right before Paul had launched his mission into Thessalonica, he had been shamefully mistreated and imprisoned by some businessmen in Philippi, and he was forced by the city officials to leave the city. However, this did not discourage Paul. He did not give up the ministry because he had been persecuted. He moved on to another city, Thessalonica. But note what he faced in Thessalonica: persecution—the same mistreatment and attacks. Did this discourage and cause him to give up the ministry? No! He continued to boldly preach the gospel despite the opposition and conflict. The point is this: bold preaching is proof of a true and strong minister. A true and strong minister knows that God has called him and he knows why God has called him: to preach the gospel. Therefore, he boldly preaches regardless of circumstances. His bold preaching of the gospel is one of the strongest answers to his critics.

APPLICATION 1:

Note what bold preaching means. It means to preach the "gospel of God," not to lambaste one's critics. The pulpit is not the place to deal with critics; it is the place for preaching the gospel of God—the place where the unsearchable riches of Christ are to be proclaimed. This is exactly what Paul did despite the critics of the gospel who opposed him.

"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Tim.4:2).

APPLICATION 2:

The word "bold" means to speak boldly and freely; to speak out and to speak publicly without fear. Too many people fail to witness for Christ because they fear ridicule, embarrassment, mockery, or persecution. They are secret believers of Christ instead of bold witnesses for Christ.

ILLUSTRATION:

Are you bold in your witness or do you tend to water-down the message of the gospel so as to not offend anyone? Listen to this powerful testimony from one of the early church fathers:

"When the great Chrysostom was arrested by the Roman Emperor, the latter sought to make the Greek Christian recant, but without success. So the emperor discussed with his advisers what could be done to the prisoner. 'Shall I put him in a dungeon?' the Emperor asked.

"'No,' one of his counselors replied, 'for he will be glad to go. He longs for the

quietness wherein he can delight in the mercies of his God.

"'Then he shall be executed!' said the Emperor.

"'No,' was the answer, 'for he will also be glad to die. He declares that in the event of death he will be in the presence of his Lord.'

"'What shall we do then?' the ruler asked.

"'There is only one thing that will give Chrysostom pain,' the counselor said. 'To cause Chrysostom to suffer, make him sin. He is afraid of nothing except sin.'"

If you were in the same situation, what would the opposition say about your life, your witness? Would you, too, be bold in spreading the gospel? What gives you the greatest fear in your Christian witness?

OUESTIONS:

1. Are you bold in your witness regardless of circumstances?

2. What is your natural tendency if someone opposes you?

To give up.
To fight back.
To compromise.

Explain why one of these options is true for you.

3. What can you do in order to overcome any fears you might have when sharing the gospel?

3. HE PREACHES A PURE GOSPEL, LIVES A CLEAN LIFE, AND DOES NOT DECEIVE PEOPLE (v.3).

Three things are said here.

- 1. The strong minister preaches a pure gospel. The word "deceit" means error. Paul did not add to nor take away from the Word of God.
 - ⇒ He did not tip-toe around or bypass controversial subjects because of opposition.
 - ⇒ He did not attempt to tickle the ears of people by preaching only the subjects that they liked; he did not neglect the whole counsel of God's Word.
 - ⇒ He did not concentrate on pleasing subjects in order to win the approval of people; he did not neglect the subjects of sin and judgment.
 - ⇒ He did not preach in order to secure personal acceptance and support nor to gain a personal following.
 - ⇒ He did not preach to secure his livelihood nor to strengthen his position as pastor.
 - ⇒ He did not preach his own ideas nor the novel ideas of others. He did not follow the latest theological fashion in order to appear up-to-date and well-read.

Paul preached the pure gospel, the pure Word of God. The message of Jesus Christ was not his creation; it was the act of God, the glorious gospel of salvation which God had sent to men through His Son. Paul was not the creator of the message; God was.

⇒ Paul was only the messenger of God—a mere man whom God had employed to

proclaim His message.

⇒ Paul was only the ambassador of God—a mere servant chosen to deliver the King's message to the world of men.

The point is this: Paul had no right to change the message. He had absolutely nothing to do with formulating the gospel of Christ. Therefore, he preached the gospel exactly as God had given it. He preached the pure gospel, the pure Word of God, and he did it without deviating one iota from it. His exhortation was not of error.

2. The strong minister lives a pure and clean life. The word "uncleanness" has to do with moral uncleanness and impurity.² Paul was being charged with immorality. It is startling to think that Paul was accused of immorality. However, such an accusation was not to be unexpected because of the immoral society of the day, a society so immoral that it had permeated some of the

very religions of the day. Paul clearly says that he was not guilty. He had not used the ministry nor his position in the ministry to attract women. He had not lived in uncleanness.³

APPLICATION:

Note two lessons that we must always keep in mind as the followers and servants of God.

1) Some believers—ministers and laymen alike—have rumors spread about them. Rumors, of course, damage, hurt, and often destroy the testimony and ministry of people. But most tragic of all, rumors always affect the name of Christ, turning some people away from the gospel, away from any chance of ever being reached for Christ. The persons who begin and spread rumors that destroy people shall face the wrath of God regardless of their profession to know God.

2) Some believers—ministers and laymen alike—fall and commit immorality. This, of course, stirs wild imaginations in those who are most hurt by the fall of the believer, imaginations of one immoral behavior heaped upon another. The hurt person shares his or her hurt with dear friends, and from this, rumors begin. Before long, rumor is built upon rumor. Unfortunately, this goes on until about all that is known is rumor and what has been imagined. As the followers and ministers of Christ, we must always remember this: if the fallen person is a genuine believer, a true follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, one of two things will happen...

The fallen believer will repent and confess his sin to God, and God will forgive him. God will also begin to use him again—sometimes more effectively than ever before. Why? Because God is a God of restoration. If He were not, few if any of us would ever be serving Him. This is a fact that we desperately need to

learn.

• God will take the fallen believer home to be with Him. Some genuine believers do slip into sin and enslavement—a point beyond which they are willing to return to Christ. Now note: only God knows when a believer is unwilling to repent and when he has reached the point where he will never repent. At that point, the believer is never again to be a witness for Christ. In fact, his life and testimony are only doing damage and cutting the heart of Christ beyond imagination. Therefore, God has no choice but to take him home to be with Him.

"Abstain from all appearance of evil. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Th.5:22-23).

- 3. The strong minister does not deceive people. There is no deception about him at all.
 - a. Paul did not deceive people by preaching a false gospel. He was not working...

• to secure a personal following.

• to earn a living.

• to serve in a respectable profession.

• to live a comfortable life.

Paul was sincere and genuine: he preached a true gospel. And he was only trying to share that gospel so that men might come to know the only living and true God.

b. Paul did not deceive people by the life he lived. He did not preach one thing and live another. He was not unclean, immoral, or dirty. He lived a pure and righteous life before God and the people.

"But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine" (Tit.2:1).

OUESTIONS:

- 1. Does any believer, whether preacher, teacher, or layman, have the right to pick and choose from the Bible what he chooses to believe and proclaim? Why is it important to preach God's Word alone--without adding to or taking away from it?
- 2. If someone rejects the gospel that you share, who are they really rejecting?

3. What is the secret to staying morally pure? Is it possible in a corrupt and perverted society?

4. HE PREACHES TO PLEASE GOD, NOT MEN (v.4).

Most men do not want to hear about...

sin and judgment.

• the utter necessity of men to depend upon the death of Christ in order to be saved.

• the demand that a person commit all he is and has to Christ in order to meet the needs of a desperate world.

The preaching of the truth is not always popular, not with a carnal and unbelieving people. Therefore, when a minister is thrown in the midst of a people who are worldly, he can be tempted to tone down his message to please the people. The temptation can be especially strong if his livelihood is at risk.

However, note what Paul says: he sought only to please God, not men. There were two strong

reasons why.

1. First, God was the Person who had trusted him with the gospel, not men. God owned the gospel, and He was the Person who had called Paul to proclaim the gospel. Men had nothing to do with the formulation of the gospel nor with calling Paul. God would take care of him as he preached the gospel. God had called him to preach; therefore, he was God's. Consequently, he could trust God to take care of him if men reacted against the gospel and attacked him.

2. Second, God alone would try his heart and judge him. He was to stand and give an account for his ministry some day, and he was to stand before God not before men. Men might be able to cause some difficulty for him on earth, but God would cause difficulty for him through all

eternity if he abused or opposed the gospel of God.

"The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe" (Pr.29:25).

QUESTIONS:

1. When should you water down your message in order not to offend someone? What

• are the effects of a diluted gospel?

2. For you, which is easier: to please God or to please man? Explain your answer.

3. How can you cultivate the desire to please God more than man in your life?

5. HE DOES NOT PREACH FOR WHAT HE CAN GET OUT OF IT (v.5).

1. The word "flattery" here means the kind of undue compliments that are given in order to get something out of people. Paul did not flatter people in order to secure their friendship, following, or support. He, of course, commended people; and his letters in the New Testament show that he commended them quite often. But he did it truthfully, always covering the weak areas that people needed to strengthen as well as their strong and commendable areas.

"Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's person; neither let me give flattering titles unto man" (Job 32:21).

The word covetousness shows that Paul was accused of being in the ministry out of greed; that he had chosen the ministry to earn a livelihood and to make money. Emphatically, Paul denies this and says that his life-style proves it. He declares that the church knows the fact and that God is witness to the truth.

> "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law" (Ro.13:8).

OUESTIONS:

1. What is the difference between flattery and encouragement? Why is it important to know the difference?

What are some wrong reasons for entering the ministry or for serving God in any

way? What motivates you to serve?

What fruit does a person bear whose motive is to please God alone? If his motive is to please self?

6. HE DOES NOT PREACH FOR GLORY NOR FOR PRESTIGE, AUTHORITY, OR POSITION (v.6).

Note two things.

Paul says that he did not seek the glory, prestige, honor, or recognition of people. He was not out to be recognized as a great preacher or good minister. He was not seeking to be recognized as a leader or as a man of position or authority.

"But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mt.20:26-28).

Paul says that he had the right to assert his authority as an apostle of Christ. Being a minister of God is a great honor, and men should respect and appreciate the call. But the minister of God must not exalt his authority, for he has been called by God Himself, called to serve the sovereign Majesty of the universe. He must not be demanding and ordering people around. God has not called the minister to hold a position of honor or authority but to minister and preach the gospel.

OUESTIONS:

1. How does the world define success? How does the church define success? Can the servant of God have the success of both? Why or why not?

Why do you think God blessed Paul with so many responsibilities?

Considering your own motives and desires in life, how much responsibility can God trust you with? Would you consider yourself to be trust-worthy? Would your pastor consider you to be trust-worthy? How about your family and friends? Those whom you work with everyday?

7. HE PREACHES GENTLY AND LOVINGLY (v.7-8).

What Paul says is descriptive, and it shows the deep love he held for the church and its believers at Thessalonica.

Paul was as gentle toward them as a mother who nurses her children. The idea is that the minister must minister to his people with...

tenderness • affection •

intensity

warmth

care

love

He must treat them as precious, as his most beloved people, holding them ever so close to his heart.

2. Paul's affection for his people was so strong that he preached the gospel to them in the midst of adversity and great opposition. And he was willing to do even more: he was willing to pour out his soul for them; to sacrifice his very life to make sure that they came to know Christ and the eternal salvation that was in Him. Note that Paul says he was willing to sacrifice his life for one simple reason: they were dear to him. The word dear means beloved. They were his beloved people.

"Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved" (Ph.4:1).

ILLUSTRATION:

Are you noted for the amount of "TLC" (tender-loving-care) that you shower on those around you? Listen to this touching story from the foreign mission field:

"Rev. Ira Gillett, missionary to Portuguese East Africa, tells the story of a group of natives who made a long journey and walked past a government hospital to come to the mission hospital for treatment. When asked why they had walked the extra distance to reach the mission hospital when the same medicines were available at the government institution, they replied, "The medicines may be the same, but the hands are different." 5

The servants of our Lord must be gentle, caring, sincere--can the same be said about you?

OUESTIONS:

1. What is the biggest challenge you face in being loving towards those whom you consider to be "unlovely"?

2. Was there a time when someone was very tender and caring toward you? How did it

make you feel?

3. How can you show a tenderness and gentle caring for people? Why should you do it?

8. HE PREACHES, LABORING NIGHT AND DAY (v.9).

Paul did not have a forty-hour nor a five-day work week. He did not work until four or five

o'clock in the afternoon nor until dark and then have the rest of the day for himself.6

Paul was the servant of Christ sent to meet the desperate needs of the world, reaching men with the glorious news that Christ could save them from death so that they might have eternal life. How could he rest and relax when people in every city and community were dying daily? He, of course, needed sleep and rest as all men do; but it is clear from Paul's letters that he slept and rested only as he needed. He was not slothful nor lazy when it came to sleeping and lounging around. Note why: he did not want to be chargeable to any man. What did he mean? Just what God says: that every minister and believer has the blood of the world upon his hands and will be held accountable for getting the message to them—the message that they can be saved from death and receive eternal life.

"Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together" (Jn.4:35-36).

174	TWM	TI		T. C	cı.	
	111413	46 H	4 2	12.71		

1. Who holds you accountable in terms of your personal schedule? Do they have the right to have input into how you best spend your time?

2. One of the great challenges that all of us face is to be good stewards of our time. Twenty-four hours a day is all that we get. Can you make better use of your time? How?

3. What kind of work ethic do you have?

I'm strictly an 8-to-5 person.

I'm a work-a-holic.

I'm on God's time: I work when He says to work, and I rest when He says to rest.

Are you comfortable with your answer above? Why or why not?

9. HE PREACHES WITH A CLEAN LIFE, AN IMPECCABLE LIFE (v.10).

Paul says...

- that he lived a holy life before God: a life separated from the world and set apart totally to God.
- that he lived a just and righteous life before men: a life that loved and treated men just as God said and just as he wanted them to treat him.

• that he lived an unblameable life before both God and man.

"And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men" (Acts 24:16).

APPLICATION:

You, too, can live a life that is sanctified, that is, holy and set apart. But sanctification is a lifetime process. It does not happen overnight. Often, a believer is tempted to depart from the process, creating his own life, apart from God.

What can keep us on the right path? The desire to please the Lord, to set a good example, to win people to Christ. Heroes of morality are desperately needed. It was said by a pastor from Minnesota, "The best gift that you can give anyone is your own personal holiness."

Can you give the gift of holiness, of a clean life, to those who know you?

OUESTIONS:

1. How did God separate you from the world?

2. What kind of gift would your own personal holiness be:

a hypocritical gift?

a superficial gift? a deceptive gift?

a gift that says, "I could care less about what I give you"?

a treasured, priceless gift?

3. Is your life above reproach? Can anyone accuse you of saying one thing but living another? How can you live a more consistent life?

10. HE PREACHES AS A FATHER—TENDERLY GIVING DIRECTION (v.11).

The minister is not only like a mother, he is also like a father. Three fatherly functions are listed.

⇒ The minister exhorts just like a father: directs, guides, and teaches.

"For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted" (1 Cor.14:31).

⇒ The minister comforts just like a father: encourages, consoles, supports, sustains, holds up, lifts up, relieves, and eases pain.

"If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind" (Ph.2:1-2).

⇒ The minister charges just like a father: testifies, witnesses, protects, and warns.

"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Col.2:8).

OUESTIONS:

- 1. What images come to your mind when you think about your earthly father? Your heavenly Father?
- 2. Which of these qualities should the Christian minister or believer imitate as he ministers to others?
- 3. How does an understanding of this verse help you do a better job in ministry?

11. HE PREACHES WITH ONE OBJECTIVE—EDIFICATION (v.12).

The strong and true minister preaches and ministers with one objective—to lead his people to walk worthy of the Lord. God has given us the most glorious promise imaginable: the wonderful privilege of living forever in His kingdom and glory. Therefore, we must walk worthy of that promise. We must live excellent lives—walk day by day just as we should walk—honoring and building up the name of God.

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 Jn.1:7).

ILLUSTRATION:

Believers are to be about the business of edification. For sure, this will not come from the world. It must come through the church.

Bruce Larson, in his book Wind and Fire, points out some interesting facts about sandhill cranes:

"These large birds, who fly great distances across continents, have three remarkable qualities. First, they rotate leadership. No one bird stays out in front all the time. Second, they choose leaders who can handle turbulence. And then, all during the time one bird is leading, the rest are honking their affirmation. That's not a bad model for the church. Certainly we need leaders who can handle turbulence and who are aware that leadership ought to be shared. But most of all, we need a church where we are all honking encouragement."

What a glorious sound it would be if we were all 'honking' our encouragement!

OUESTIONS:

- 1. How can you build up other people? Who do you need to encourage on a daily basis?
- 2. What kind of encouragement do you need today?
- 3. What kinds of things encourage you to trust Christ?

SUMMARY:

The Christian believer has been given the enormous responsibility and privilege of imitating a godly and God-honoring life. No matter what your calling or ministry, the foundation you must build upon is the same as any other believer:

- I. He has a full and fruitful ministry—not vain and fruitless.
- 2. He preaches boldly.
- 3. He preaches a pure gospel, lives a clean life, and does not deceive people.
- 4. He preaches to please God, not men.
- 5. He does not preach for what he can get out of it.
- 6. He does not preach for glory nor for the prestige, authority, or position.
- 7. He preaches gently and lovingly.
- 8. He preaches, laboring night and day.
- 9. He preaches with a clean life, an impeccable life.
- 10. He preaches as a father—tenderly giving direction.
- 11. He preaches with one objective—edification.

PERSONAL JOURNAL NOTES: (Reflection & Response)

- 1. The most important thing that I learned from this lesson was:
- 2. The area that I need to work on the most is:
- 3. I can apply this lesson to my life by:
- 4. Closing Statement of Commitment:

Baptist Standard. Paul Lee Tan. Encyclopedia of 7,700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times. (Rockville, MD: Assurance Publishers, 1985), p.282.

William Barclay. The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians. "The Daily Study Bible (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminister Press, 1959), p.220.

A.T. Robertson quoting Lightfoot. Word Pictures in the New Testament, Vol.4, p.16. William Barclay. The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians, p.221.

Upper Room. Walter B. Knight. 3,000 Illustrations for Christian Service (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdman's Publishing Company, 1971), p.402.

John Walvoord. The Thessalonian Epistles, p.30.

Craig B. Larson, Editor. Illustrations for Preaching & Teaching (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1993), p.129.

D. The Model Church: lust and they please not!

	A Strong Doorle	us, and they please not	
	A Strong People,	God, and are contrary	
	2:13-20	to all men:	d. Did not please Goo
		16 Forbidding us to	e. Opposed all men
		speak to the Gentiles	f. Shut people out
1. They received the	13 For this cause also	that they might be	g. The result of their
Word of God as the	thank we God without	saved, to fill up their	guilt
Word of God	ceasing, because, when	sins always: for the	1) They became
a. Received it through	ye received the word	wrath is come upon	full of their sins
men	of God which ye heard	them to the uttermost.	2) They brought
b. Received it not as	of us, ye received it	17 But we, brethren.	wrath upon
the Word of men,	not as the word of	being taken from you	themselves
but as "it is in truth,"	men, but as it is in	for a short time in	4. They possessed a
the Word of God	truth, the word of	presence, not in heart,	strong fellowship
c. Received it as it	God, which effectual-	endeavoured the more	a. Paul had been
worked in their		abundantly to see your	
lives		face with great desire.	
2. They became followers		18 Wherefore we would	
of strong churches:		have come unto you,	
Stood fast despite se-		even I Paul, once and	
vere persecution		again; but Satan hin-	
VOIO POLICOGIO	Christ Jesus: for ye		by Satan
		19 For what is our	
	things of your own	hope, or joy, or crown	to bring glory & joy
		of rejoicing? Are not	
		even ye in the pres-	
	mey have of the Jews.	even ye in the pres-	a. 10 whom: raul

Section I THE MODEL CHURCH 1 Thessalonians 1:1-3:13

15 Who both killed ence of our Lord Jesus

the Lord Jesus, and Christ at his coming?

their own prophets, 20 For ye are and have persecuted glory and joy.

b. When: At Christ's

coming

Study 4: THE MODEL CHURCH: A STRONG PEOPLE

Text: 1 Thessalonians 2:13-20

Aim: To follow the example of a model church; to adopt the traits of a strong people.

Memory Verse:

3. They escaped the

a. Killed the Lord Je-

Jews' guilt

"For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe" (1 Thessalonians 2:13).

INTRODUCTION:

Have you ever been picked on by a bully? Years ago, a popular advertisement was featured in a variety of magazines. Pictured was a 98-pound weakling lying on a beach who was brushing sand out of his face. How did the sand get there? A bully kicked it in his face. The intent of the advertisement was to touch the emotions of people who were fed up with getting picked on or stepped on by some bully in their lives. All a person had to do was fill out the coupon,

enclose his personal check, and wait for his "anti-bully" kit. He could hardly wait for the mail to come because he had a vision of being able to kick sand back in the face of the bully. With

his new-found strength, he would never fear the bully again.

In many ways, believers can relate to that 98 pound weakling. When it comes to confronting the threatening problems of life, we often find ourselves flat on our backs, sand in our faces, waving the white flag of surrender. Instead of living like victorious Christians who are triumphant, we forfeit the battle without a fight. If we want to be a part of a strong church, we must draw on God's strength not our own.

A strong church is a church of strong people, a people who have trusted Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord and who are continuing stedfast in Him. This passage covers the traits of a

strong people.

OUTLINE:

They received the Word of God as the Word of God (v.13). 1.

They became followers of strong churches: stood fast despite severe persecution (v.14).

They escaped the Jews' guilt (v.15-16). 3.

They possessed a strong fellowship (v.17-18). 4.

They were destined to bring glory and joy to other believers (v.19-20). 5.

1. THEY RECEIVED THE WORD OF GOD AS THE WORD OF GOD (v.13).

Note three facts.

- The Thessalonian believers had received the Word through the preaching and teaching of men. Paul, Silas, and Timothy had carried and proclaimed the Word of God to them. They or some other believer had to take the Word to the Thessalonians, for there was no other way they could have received it. It takes people to communicate the Word of God. If believers did not speak and share the Word, then it would never be heard or received. It would stop dead in its tracks, and no one would ever again be reached for Christ. There would never again be a branch added to the tree of life. The only way the Word of God can go forth is for believers to share it. The point is this: proclaiming and bearing witness to the Word of God is God's ordained way to reach the world for Christ. He has ordained the mission of proclaiming it to men, not to angels nor to any other creature. The duty to proclaim and bear testimony to the Word of God lies in the lap of believers. For this reason, we must proclaim and bear witness to God's Word every day of our lives. The very life of every soul upon earth rests in our hands. Paul knew this; that is the reason he had carried the Word of God to the Thessalonians.
- The Thessalonian believers had received the Word not as the word of men but as it is in truth, the Word of God. What a phenomenal statement! Paul unequivocally declares that the Word he proclaimed was not the word of men but the Word of God Himself. He further adds that "it is in truth, the Word of God." Do you and I believe that the Word of God is the actual Word of God, actually from God?

⇒ The Thessalonians believed it.

⇒ Paul believed it.

⇒ But do you and I believe it? Really believe it?

Remember: what Paul preached was the Old Testament Scriptures and the mysteries of Christ which God had revealed directly to him (cp. Ro.16:25-26; 1 Cor.2:7; Eph.1:9; 3:4, 9; Col.1:27; 2:2; 4:3; 2 Tim.3:16). Most people do not believe that the Word of God (the Bible) is the actual Word of God, actually from God.

⇒ They think that the Word of God is only of men and from men.

⇒ Some think that the New Testament is only what the early apostles and believers could remember about Christ and conclude from His teaching.

⇒ Some think that the Old Testament is only the religious book and religious fables of

the Jews, written by their great religious leaders.

⇒ Some think that the Bible is the great religious book chosen by God to use in the lives of people when it is proclaimed. They say that when the Bible is sitting on the shelf, it is not the Word of God; but when it is read or proclaimed, it becomes the Word of God: God uses its message to move upon the hearts of people and convict

However, note a critical point, a point so critical that it can be the determining factor affecting a man's eternal destiny: both the Bible and Paul claim that the Word of God is not the word of men, but the Word of God. "It is in truth, the Word of God." And the Thessalonian church and its believers received it as the Word of God. (See A Closer Look: Word of God--1 Th.2:13 for more discussion.)

The Thessalonian believers received the Word so that it could work and operate in their lives. The verse says that it is God who works in us that believe. But what is it that we believe? The Word of God. If we do not believe the Word of God, there is nothing left to believe but the word of men. And the best that men can give us is messages and words that stir us to greater...

self-improvement •

works

self-development • goodness self-image

morality

equality commitment

All of this is good, but it has one terrible flaw: it ends. Everything about man ends when man dies. The messages and words of men can do no more than what man can do, and man can do no more than die and continue in his terrible separation from life and God. Man cannot save himself. This is the reason man must hope and trust that God is love and has loved us enough to speak to us—speak accurately and clearly. If God cares no more than to leave us in the dark about how to become acceptable to Him, then we never want to have to face Him. Why? Because He could not be a God of love—not if He has left us in a dark, evil, and destructive world—left us groping and grasping to find our way to Him. A God of love would love and speak to us clearly and accurately, without any error, so that we could unmistakably know Him, ourselves, and the world:

⇒ who we are

⇒ why we are here

⇒ why things are the way they are

⇒ where we are going

This is the glorious gospel: God has loved us and has given us His Word, the very Word of God itself, the Holy Scriptures. Some of the Thessalonians believed in the Word of God. Therefore, God worked in their hearts and lives, converting and growing them to be more and more like His dear Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

"But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear" (Mt.13:16).

ILLUSTRATION:

How important is it to get God's Word into the hands of people? Think about it! So many of us are rich—we have several translations of Scripture on our bookshelves. Unfortunately, there are millions who do not have a copy of the precious Word of God. Listen to this stirring story of one man's attempt to reach the nations with God's Word. Let's call him Joe.

Joe was a member of an organization called The Gideons. The burden of the Gideons is to distribute God's Word so that people might read the Scriptures and make a decision to follow Christ. On one particular trip to a Far Eastern nation, a story began to unfold, a story that would be retold time and again.

On his trip, Joe had a suitcase of Testaments that he was eager to share. Never in his wildest dreams did he think he would run out before his trip was over. But there he was looking at a large group of young people. His heart sank as he quickly realized that there were more people than there were Bibles.

"God, what shall I do? There are not enough Testaments for all of these precious people." As Joe gazed into the faces of these young people, it was their eyes that really struck his heart. He could feel the deep spiritual hunger that was starv-

ing for God--if only they could have God's Word.

"All right, Father. Which ones do you want to have a Bible?" Expecting God to mark His choices with some kind of visible sign, deep within his heart, Joe heard this instead, "Joe, you select the ones. This is your responsibility, not Mine." And so, in obedience, Joe did the hardest thing he has ever had to do in his life—decide who would and who would not receive God's Word.

Needless to say, this experience made a lasting impression on Joe's life. By the grace of God, never again would he be caught short of Testaments. Despite his broken heart, God used Joe to distribute thousands of Testaments to people who found Christ as Lord and Savior.

OUESTIONS:

1. Has God broken your heart for those who have not heard the gospel?

2. What are you doing to get God's Word out to the world?

3. Why does God use Christian believers to share His Word with the lost instead of using angels?

4. How does an understanding of your responsibility to share the gospel affect how

you live?

5. In what ways can you get the Word of God into the hands of those who need to hear?

A CLOSER LOOK:

(2:13) Word of God: the Bible claims to be the Word of God.

⇒ The unity of Scripture indicates an origin that could come only from one mind, God's mind.

⇒ Scripture has changed millions of lives for God.

⇒ Fulfilled prophecy and archeology substantiate a divine origin.

In fact, the unique feature of the Bible is that it has always been exhaustively substantiated to be the Word of God by any approach of investigation that is serious and honest. But note: both seriousness and honesty are necessary for the truth to be received. No less evidence could be expected from the mind and providence of God. For God can speak only the truth, and any pure investigation of truth can only substantiate His Word. But in saying this, it is necessary to recall that faith is an element in substantiating anything. Therefore, in accepting the Bible as the Word of God, faith is involved; it is one of the elements required.

However, the supreme authority for accepting the Bible as the Word of God is Jesus Christ. If we believe in the divine mission of Christ and His apostles, then we must believe that the Bi-

ble is the Word of God (Jn.5:39).

That Jesus Christ was a historical person is fact.

- ⇒ That Jesus Christ claims to be the Son of God is fact.
- ⇒ That Jesus Christ is the Son of God is faith.

That the Bible is an historical book is fact.

⇒ That the Bible claims to be the Word of God is fact.

⇒ That the Bible is the Word of God is faith.

"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (1 Cor.2:12-13).

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God [breathed], and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteous-

ness" (2 Tim.3:16).

"For the prophecy [Word of God] came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pt.1:21).

OUESTIONS:

1. Before you study the Bible, how should you prepare yourself? Why?

2. Is the Bible your final authority on how you live? Is that practical? How do you do it?

3. Give some examples of how the Bible has helped you live for Christ.

2. THEY BECAME FOLLOWERS OF STRONG CHURCHES: STOOD FAST DESPITE SEVERE PERSECUTION (v.14).

They stand fast in Christ despite trials, even when facing severe persecution. Note that it was their own countrymen who were persecuting them, both Jew and Gentile, but the instigators were the Jews.

"But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people" (Acts 17:5).

This is exactly what was happening with the Judaean churches. It was their own countrymen who were persecuting them. Therefore, Paul was able to say to the Thessalonian believers that they were following the great example of the Judaean churches: they were standing fast for Christ even as the Judaean churches were.

APPLICATION:

Note two lessons.

1) Nothing cuts and threatens us like opposition from those who are closest to us: our family, friends, neighbors, and countrymen. When those whom we love the most oppose us, the temptation to give in is strongest. But we must never give in, for our eternal destiny is at stake. We must continue on with Christ, trusting Him to take care of us and to win many of our persecutors to Christ through the testimony of our stedfastness.

This was what the Judaean believers did, and it was what the Thessalonian believers did. It must also be what we do: stand fast for Christ no matter what opposition may confront

us.

2) One of the strongest helps when facing persecution is to look to the example of others who have stood strong against opposition. This is what the Thessalonian believers did: they followed the example of the Judaean churches. The faithfulness of both the Judaean and Thessalonian believers stands as a strong example for us.

"Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also" (Jn.15:20).

OUESTIONS:

1. Have you ever felt persecuted by someone who claimed to be religious? Can you explain why persecution can come from someone who is close to you?

2. What things can you do to overcome persecution? What should you do if you ever feel like

giving up?

3. Why does God allow you to be persecuted?

3. THEY ESCAPED THE JEWS' GUILT (v.15-16).

A strong church escapes the guilt of the Jews. This may seem like a strange way to word this point, but what is in mind is this.

A person either stands in support of Christ or in opposition to Christ.

⇒ A church either stands in support of Christ or in opposition to Christ.

The Jewish persecutors stood in opposition to Christ, in opposition to God's very own Son. And remember: they were religionists, a body of religious people who were set on destroying the Christian church in the name of religion. But the Thessalonian church and its believers stood in support of Christ; therefore, they escaped whatever guilt hangs over a person's head for opposing God's Son. The Thessalonian believers were free of the terrible sins and guilt that the Jews had committed in the name of religion. What were the sins and guilt of the Jews? Paul lists them, and the indictment is one of the most terrible ever drawn up against man.

1. They killed the Lord Jesus. Note the title "Lord." They thought they were killing only a man, only a carpenter from Nazareth, but they were actually killing the Lord. When using "Lord." one means all that is included in the title: the Lord God, the One who came out of

heaven itself, the very Son of God Himself. The terrible guilt is clearly seen:

⇒ the guilt of killing a person.

⇒ the guilt of killing the Lord Himself.

2. They killed their own prophets. This was a charge that has often been leveled at the Jews.

"Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets" (Mt.23:31).

3. They persecuted Christian believers. They not only rejected the gospel, but they wanted to destroy the message as well as those who followed and proclaimed it. They did not want anyone following Christ.

"And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide" (Acts 4:1-3).

4. They did not please God. No person can please God if he stands in opposition to Christ. The only way a person can please God is to surrender his life to Christ—to give all he is and has to Christ. The Jews were not about to do this. Nothing was going to break them away from their own religious ceremonies and ideas about religion.

5. They were contrary to all men. They opposed and hated anyone who did not believe as they did. They should have loved those who differed, but instead they bitterly despised them.

This is the difference between Christianity and Judaism and so many other religions. We who believe do claim that Christ and the Holy Scriptures are the truth, but we do not hate and oppose those who differ with us. We love them and do all we can to reach out to help them. We help to meet the needs of every man even if he goes to his grave never accepting Christ. We love him; therefore, we want him to know the truth. But if he rejects Christ, we do not cast him off. We will continue to help him any way we can—in love.

6. They tried to stamp out the Word of God lest some person be saved. Just imagine trying to stop God's Word. How in the world can a man stop the Word of God? The answer is self-evident. Even a world of men could not stop God's Word. This is the foolishness of men, and it

was the foolishness of the Jews.

Now, note the results of the sins of the Jews. First, they filled up their sin; that is, their sin became full and overflowed and kept on overflowing. What a terrible indictment. The idea is that they sinned so much that they reached the point of no return. Returning to God was impossible.¹

Second, the wrath of God is come upon the Jews to the uttermost. The idea is that the judgment of God upon the Jews was certain, for they had...

killed His Son, the Lord Jesus.

• killed His prophets.

• persecuted His church followers.

stood against all men.

• tried to stamp out His Word so that other people might not be saved.

Think for a moment: if Jesus Christ is truly God's Son, then the judgment of God upon the Jewish unbelievers is inevitable. In fact, His judgment upon any person or people who stand in opposition to Christ in inevitable. No man shall be able to escape His judgment.

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness" (Ro.1:18).

OUESTIONS:

1. What sins of the Jews were you guilty of before you met Christ?

2. What are some ways that the world and unbelievers try to stamp out the Word of God? What role would God have you play in opposing their plans?

3. Why is God's judgment inevitable to those who oppose Christ?

4. THEY POSSESSED A STRONG FELLOWSHIP (v.17-18).

The fellowship of the Thessalonians was so strong that Paul just longed to return to them. Remember: he had been forced to flee the city because his life was being threatened by the persecution that had risen against the gospel. The ache of Paul's heart for the Thessalonians and their fellowship is seen in his emphasis:

⇒ he had been taken from them in presence but "not in heart."

⇒ he "endeavored" to return: eagerly sought to return; made a serious, concentrated effort to return.

⇒ he "abundantly" or exceedingly sought to return.

⇒ he sought to return "with great desire": with zeal, with intense longing, with strong passion.

Just imagine a fellowship of believers so strong that such effort is exerted by Paul to be present with them. What a fellowship they must have had—even in the face of persecution.

However, note: Paul's return to the Thessalonian believers had been hindered by Satan. The word "hindered" means to cut in a road; to make a road impassable.² It means to put up a

roadblock for the purpose of stopping an expedition.³ When a church is as strong as the Thessalonian church, Satan is bound to do all he can to weaken it and stop its growth. One of the primary ways to weaken a church is to attack the minister of the church. This was Satan's strategy in Thessalonica. What was the roadblock that Satan threw against Paul?

⇒ Was it some illness? (2 Cor.12:7; Gal.4:13).

⇒ Was it some serious problem in Corinth where Paul was ministering—some serious problem that had been stirred up by Satan to keep Paul there and to prevent his return to Thessalonica? Remember: Corinth was full of carnal believers, prime prospects for Satan's attack (1 Th.3:1).

Just what the hindrance was is not known. But the point to note is the strength of the believers' fellowship in Thessalonica—a fellowship so strong that Paul longed to return and share in it with the believers.

"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently" (1 Pt.1:22).

ILLUSTRATION:

How much does meeting with other believers mean to you? Do you take your fellowship for

granted or do you have a vibrant passion to meet with God's people?

There is a story about a man who would walk for miles to get to his church. Waymon was the kind of guy who had a hard time fitting into the "right" social circles. The truth be known, you might even have had a hard time accepting him into your group if you were the type of person who judged a book by its cover.

Fortunately, Waymon's church was flexible enough to look beyond his rough edges and accept him as a part of the flock. The church that Waymon chose to be his family was considered

to be a pretty affluent group. But their affluence did not blind them with pride.

Waymon was a whole lot more reliable than many members. The weather did not keep him away. He was always there to help set up the chairs and do anything that would make the worship service a meaningful experience.

Why did Waymon love to come to church? Because in that place he found the love and ac-

ceptance which was not his out in the world.

Would you walk a mile or more for love?

OUESTIONS:

1. What things draw you to your church?

2. What schemes does Satan use in your church to defeat its ministry? What can be done to

frustrate his plans?

3. Is your church a place that welcomes all men--regardless of their status in life? Are you the type of person who makes everyone feel welcome--or do you pick and choose according to your impressions or feelings about people?

A CLOSER LOOK:

(2:18) Satan: Paul never downplayed the work and activity of Satan. He recognized the existence and activity of some terrible force of evil—some terrible supernatural spirit of evil—some terrible person in the spiritual world who is revealed in Scripture as Satan or the devil. Paul saw Satan...

- as the tempter who tempts men (1 Th.3:5).
- as the "evil one" (2 Th.3:3).
- as the god of this world (2 Cor.4:4).
- as the prince of the power of the air (Eph.2:2).

OUESTIONS:

1. Why do you think some people deny the reality of Satan? What evidence could you share to convince them that Satan is alive and well?

2. In what ways does Satan tempt you? How do you resist his temptations?

3. What kind of respect do you have for Satan's power and influence in this world? Use Scripture to support your answer.

5. THEY WERE DESTINED TO BRING GLORY AND JOY TO OTHER BELIEVERS (v.19-20).

A strong church is destined to bring glory and joy. To whom? To the believers...

who founded the church.

who reached the believers for the Lord.

• who ministered and taught the church.

• who carried on the work of the church.

Paul clearly says that the Thessalonian believers were his hope and joy and crown of rejoicing. When? In the day when the Lord Jesus Christ will return and they will all stand in His presence.

⇒ What a hope! The return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

⇒ What a joy! Joining the Lord Jesus Christ with all the believers whom we have known, reached, and grown in Christ down here on earth.

⇒ What a crown! To offer to Christ all the dear people we have had a part in reach-

ing and growing for the Lord.

Note the word "crown." It is the victor's crown, the crown worn by the athlete after he has won the contest. The picture is that we are in a contest, a spiritual struggle against Satan for the souls of men. Therefore, we must strain and struggle and fight for the souls of men. A crown awaits us, a crown that we will miss unless there are souls to present to Christ.

APPLICATION:

Have you ever won a soul to Christ? A single soul? How many?

⇒ Ten souls?

⇒ Twenty souls?

⇒ Fifty souls?

⇒ One hundred souls?

The crown of rejoicing awaits the person who will be able to present souls to the Lord in that day. Let us all ask God to touch our hearts and help us to win souls for Him. He will if we will only ask in sincerity.

"And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of

"He [Andrew] first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ" (Jn.1:41).

ILLUSTRATION:

Would you consider yourself to be a soul-winner? There are many Christians who are intimidated with that term for a variety of reasons. We need to take comfort in the fact that God

has promised to equip His people for His work.

One night a man was driving his car when suddenly the head-lights went out. Knowing that he was close to a service station, he turned on his emergency flashers and limped to the service station. After the mechanic made a quick inspection, he simply went to the fusebox and replaced a bad fuse with a good one. After paying his bill, the man drove home with plenty of light to show the way.

Many of us as believers are driving in darkness, failing to light the way for the lost. God has given us the right equipment, but somewhere along the way we got off course; we failed to follow the light. Being a soul-winner is simply lighting the way....

for a person knowing Jesus Christ personally.

• for a person to conquer the sin and shame of this life.

• for a person to conquer the trials, tribulations, and temptations in this life.

for a person to pass from death to life, to live eternally with God.

• for a person to get out of darkness into the light.

• for a person to live a life of righteousness and goodness.

Do you want to be a soul-winner? Allow God to put the light back into your life and then you can show others the way.

OUESTIONS:

1. What types of things frustrate you when you attempt to witness to the lost? What can you do to overcome these frustrations?

2. Do you believe that God can make you a soul-winner? Why or why not?

3. How does having an understanding of God's burden for the lost help you to prioritize your daily schedule? What do you need to do to be a better witness?

SUMMARY:

Are you tired of fighting a losing battle? God wants you to be victorious, to be strong enough to conquer the threatening problems of life. As you draw on God's strength, remember the great example of the Thessalonians:

1. They received the Word of God as the Word of God.

2. They became followers of strong churches: stood fast despite severe persecution.

3. They escaped the Jews' guilt,

4. They possessed a strong fellowship.

5. They were destined to bring glory and joy to other believers.

PERSONAL JOURNAL NOTES: (Reflection & Response)

- 1. The most important thing that I learned from this lesson was:
- 2. The area that I need to work on the most is:
- 3. I can apply this lesson to my life by:
- 4. Closing Statement Of Commitment:

A.T. Robertson. Word Pictures in the New Testament, Vol.4, p.24.

Leon Morris. The Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians. "Tyndale New Testament Commentaries." (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, No date given), p.57.

William Barclay. The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians, p.225.

		CHAPTER 3	your faith, lest by	self
			some means the	
		E. The Model Church:	tempter have tempted	labor & gospel of
		A Strong Faith,	you, and our labour be	the minister is not
		3:1-10	in vain.	empty
			6 But now when	3. A strong faith is a
1. A	A strong faith made	Wherefore when we	Timotheus came from	faith that gives forth
F	Paul extremely anx-	could no longer for-	you unto us, and	an excellent testi-
i	ous for the church	bear, we thought it	brought us good tid-	mony
		good to be left at Ath-	ings of your faith and	
		ens alone:	charity, and that ye	
8	. He sent a most de-		have good remem-	
	pendable minister	theus, our brother, and		
	to them	minister of God, and		
		our fellowlabourer in		
b	o. His purpose: To	the gospel of Christ, to	7 Therefore, brethren,	4. A strong faith is a
	establish & comfort	, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,		faith that stirs the
	them	comfort you concern-		heart of its pastor &
			affliction and distress	fellow believers
2. A	A strong faith is not	3 That no man should		a. Stirs comfort
n	noved by afflictions	be moved by these		b. Stirs renewed life
а	. Must know that	afflictions: for your-		& purpose
	one is appointed to	selves know that we		
	affliction	are appointed there-		c. Stirs joy
		unto.	we render to God	
		4 For verily, when we		
		were with you, we		
		told you before that		
		we should suffer trib-		
		ulation; even as it		d. Stirs prayer
		came to pass, and ye		A tata ji
		know.	that we might see your	
b	. Must know that the	5 For this cause, when		
	temptation to cave	I could no longer for-		
	in is of Satan him-	bear, I sent to know	lacking in your faith?	

Section I THE MODEL CHURCH 1 Thessalonians 1:1-3:13

Study 5: THE MODEL CHURCH: A STRONG FAITH

Text: 1 Thessalonians 3:1-10

Aim: To build a true faith, a strong faith in Christ.

Memory Verse:

"Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction

and distress by your faith" (1 Thessalonians 3:7).

INTRODUCTION:

What is the difference between faith and presumption? Answer that question after listening to this fictional story.

While waiting at the gates of heaven, three men who had just died had a few minutes

to chat as they waited to enter heaven's gates.

The man in the front spoke with a lot of confidence. "They've just got to let me into heaven. I've served on all of the important committees in my church. My religion is very important to me. I'm sure that my attendance records for going to church have been sent up here."

The man in the middle was not quite as sure as the first man. "I hope they let me in.

I've tried to be good enough. Hopefully, that will count for something.

The third man was very confident that he would have no trouble entering heaven's gates. "I have placed my trust in Jesus Christ and His sacrifice on the cross.. I am doing what the Holy Bible says: trusting God to take my faith in Jesus Christ and count it as righteousness, as the righteousness of Christ. I have done nothing good enough to pass me through."

The first two men scoffed at the third man's narrow-mindedness. "We'll just see

who's right, won't we?" said the first man.

Well, there is no need to continue this story, for the Bible is clear about who actually made it through heaven's gates. It was not the man who trusted in his religious activities—he was filled with presumption, not faith. The man who guessed that doing his best would be enough guessed incorrectly—his trust was not in Christ, but in himself. The third man understood the difference between faith and presumption. He made it to heaven because his faith was focused upon Jesus Christ and His work on the cross. That is the key to having a strong faith.

This passage has to do with the faith of the Thessalonians. Their faith was strong, and Paul wanted to make sure that it remained strong. He stressed their faith five times in these ten verses.

 \Rightarrow He wanted to comfort, that is, strengthen, their faith (v.2).

- ⇒ He wanted to know if their *faith* was standing against the tempter's temptations (v.5).
- \Rightarrow He received word that their *faith* and love were strong (v.6).
- \Rightarrow He was comforted over their faith (v.7).
- \Rightarrow He wished to perfect their faith (v.10).

The one thing needed by Christian believers is a strong faith: a faith that honestly knows Christ and knows what it is to walk with Him day by day, trusting Him, His care, comfort, and strength. What we need is a faith that stands fast, endures, perseveres, and grows stronger and stronger in Christ. The stronger our faith and the more faith we have, the more we can conquer in life and do the things that we should do. A strong faith in Christ enables us to triumph over the trials and temptations of life and to fulfill our purpose in life.

Many of the believers in Thessalonica had a strong faith; therefore, their faith stands as a model

for us. What is a strong faith?

OUTLINE:

1. A strong faith made Paul extremely anxious for the church (v.1-2).

A strong faith is a faith that is not moved by afflictions (v.3-5).
 A strong faith is a faith that gives forth an excellent testimony (v.6).

4. A strong faith is a faith that stirs the hearts of its pastor and fellow believers (v.7-10).

1. A STRONG FAITH MADE PAUL EXTREMELY ANXIOUS FOR THE CHURCH (v.1-2).

The believers were suffering fierce persecution by both the Jewish and Gentile citizens of the city. Remember: the Jews had savagely opposed Paul when he was in Thessalonica. They had aroused some of the rowdy men who hung around in the market place to riot against Paul and the church. The believers had been meeting in the home of Jason, but when the mob attacked the home, Paul was not there. However, because of the uproar, he was forced to flee for his life. He had hoped that his absence would squelch the persecution. But his plan failed; the persecution

continued and apparently increased. The antagonists were determined to stamp out and destroy the

gospel of Christ once and for all.

Paul had fled to Athens, but his heart was in Thessalonica, longing for the believers who were suffering the fierce attacks of persecution. Note what he says: he had reached a point when he could no longer bear the suspense over their welfare. They had received Christ, escaped the sin and death of this world and received eternal life. When Paul had left them, they were standing fast in their faith. Had they cracked under the savage attacks of persecution? Or were they standing fast? They had to stand fast; it was a must, for their eternal destiny depended upon their continuing to follow Christ. Paul could bear it no longer; he had to do something. He desperately wanted to return and stand by their side, but he knew he could not. His return would only add fuel to the persecution. What could he do? He would do the next best thing: send his right hand man, Timothy (v.2). Timothy was a dependable servant of the Lord. He was...

a dear brother to Paul.

• a minister of God.

• a fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ.

If anyone could help the believers, he could. Note: Paul sent him to establish and comfort the believers in their faith.

⇒ The word "establish" means to support and strengthen. ⇒ The word "comfort" means to encourage and exhort.

OUESTIONS:

1. What reasons did Paul give for not coming to Thessalonica? Were his reasons selfish or unselfish?

2. Has God ever given you a special burden for a church? A church that is going through persecution? A church without a pastor? A church in financial trouble? A church splitting over internal differences? What emotions did you go through in relation to that burden? What could you do to help?

3. What was Timothy's mission to the Thessalonians? Is there anyone like him in your church?

How can the Lord use you to minister like Timothy did?

2. A STRONG FAITH IS NOT MOVED BY AFFLICTIONS (v.3-5).

What is a strong faith? A strong faith is a faith that is not moved by afflictions. The word "moved" is taken from a word that means to wag the tail like a dog; hence it came to mean to flatter, to deceive, to hoodwink, to beguile, to lead astray by some deceptive strategy. This gives

us some picture of the types of persecution going on.

⇒ There was an attack of spreading lies and rumors about the minister Paul: a persecution of deceit and guile; a deliberate strategy of deception. Apparently this was why the rumors of immorality and false preaching were launched against Paul. Those who opposed Paul and the gospel felt that if they could destroy Paul and his reputation, many would leave the church and some would even join forces with them against Paul (1 Th.2:3-6; 4:3-7).

There was the usual shameful treatment: mockery, ridicule, cursing, and verbal attacks against Christ and the life of righteousness to which the believers had committed them-

selves (1 Th.2:2).

⇒ There was direct confrontation and opposition: standing face to face with the believers and opposing their beliefs, threatening them if they spoke about Christ (1 Th.2:16).

⇒ There was physical abuse by mobs (Acts 17:5-6).

⇒ There was the use of civil authority and law against them if they continued to worship and speak about Christ (Acts 17:6-9).

Little else could be launched against the church and its believers except martyrdom itself. But note what Paul says: "No man should be moved by these afflictions." Despite the shameful treatment and savage attacks, the believer is not to be moved away from Christ. But when the attacks

are so severe and savage, how can the believer keep from being moved? How can he stand fast? By knowing three things.

1. The believer must know that he is appointed to persecution. He will suffer persecution. Note that Paul had taught the Thessalonians that they would suffer persecution if they accepted Christ. Why? Why does the world persecute the Christian believer so much?

a. Believers are persecuted because they are not of this world. They are called out of the world. They are in the world, but they are not of the world. They are separated from the behavior of the world. Therefore, the world reacts against them.

"If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you" (Jn.15:19).

b. They are persecuted because believers strip away the world's *cloak of sin*. They live and demonstrate a life of righteousness. Such living exposes the sins of people.

"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you....If I had not come and spoken unto them [the words of right-eousness], they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin" (Jn.15:18, 22).

c. They are persecuted because the world does not know God nor Christ. They want no god other than themselves and their own imaginations. They want to do just what they want—to fulfill their own desires, not what God wishes and demands.

"And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me" (Jn.16:3).

d. They are persecuted because the world is deceived in its concept and belief of God. The world conceives God to be the One who fulfills their earthly desires and lusts (Jn.16:2-3). Man's idea of God is that of a *Supreme Grandfather*. They think God protects, provides, and gives no matter what a person's behavior is, just so the behavior is not too far out. They think God will accept and work all things out in the final analysis. However, the true believer teaches against this. God is love, but He is also just and demands righteousness. The world rebels against this concept of God.

"They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me" (Jn.16:2-3).

Keeping these reasons in mind will help us to stand against persecution when it is launched against us. And stand we must, for we must reach the world for Christ—a world reeling under the terrible plight of so many desperate needs--from sin, evil, corruption, death, and condemnation.

2. The believer must know that the temptation to cave in to persecution is of the tempter, of Satan himself. This is the very reason Satan has launched the persecution: to strike fear in the believer to silence him. Satan wants the believer to hush up about Christ and to desert Christ. If Satan can rattle the believer to turn away from Christ and the church, then he is able to use his desertion to affect many lives. Satan is able to destroy the faith of both the believer and those who look up to him, such as children, family, and friends. Apostasy is one of the most destructive forces to the name of Christ.

APPLICATION:

The believer must keep in mind that Satan is behind all persecution and temptation to desert Christ. Remembering this will help the believer to stand fast, for no true believer wants to become apostate, to forsake God for Satan. His eternal destiny is at stake.

3. The believer must know that the labor and message of the minister is not empty. Christ died for our sins that we might not perish. Christ gives us eternal life—gives us the privileges of living forever and ever in the new heavens and earth that He is to create. But if we desert Christ, then all the labor that has gone into leading us to Christ is in vain, empty, fruitless. The work of the minister and of those who have taught us will have been useless. We must not, therefore, give in to the temptation to move away from Christ, to become apostate. We must stand fast in afflictions, no matter how severe and savage. Standing fast in persecution is the sign of a strong faith.

"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim.3:12).

ILLUSTRATION:

On what or whom is your faith focused? Making a wrong choice can prove to be fatal.

"In April 1988 the evening news reported on a photographer who was a skydiver. He had jumped from a plane along with numerous other skydivers and filmed the group as they fell and opened their parachutes. On the film shown on the telecast, as the final skydiver opened his chute, the picture went berserk. The announcer reported that the cameraman had fallen to his death, having jumped out of the plane without his parachute. It wasn't until he reached for the absent ripcord that he realized he was free-falling without a parachute.

"Until that point, the jump probably seemed exciting and fun. But tragically, he had acted with thoughtless haste and deadly foolishness. Nothing could save him, for his faith was in a parachute [that was] never buckled on. Faith in anything but an all-sufficient God can be just as tragic spiritually. Only with faith in Jesus Christ

dare we step into the dangerous excitement of life."

Remember: before you jump into a world of afflictions, make certain your parachute of faith is in Christ and that your life is strapped tightly to Christ.

OUESTIONS:

1. What worldly things are you tempted to trust in instead of in Christ?

2. What is the secret to enduring persecution?

3. What can you do in order to keep your focus on Christ?

3. A STRONG FAITH IS A FAITH THAT GIVES FORTH AN EXCELLENT TESTI-MONY (v.6).

What is strong faith? A strong faith is a faith that gives forth an excellent testimony. When

Timothy returned from his mission to the Thessalonian church, he had a glowing report.

1. The believers were standing fast in their faith in Christ. They were not buckling under to persecution nor to the temptation to be silent about Christ. They were not forsaking their worship of Christ. In practical terms, they were continuing to study the Scriptures, pray, and worship together. And when possible, when it would not arouse opposition, they were sharing Christ and the promise of eternal life with all who would listen.

"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses" (1 Tim.6:12).

2. The believers were standing fast in love—love for Christ, each other, and their fellow men. They were ministering and meeting the needs of all those who would receive their help. And they were doing all they could to demonstrate love, care, and good citizenship toward all.

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (Jn.13:34-35).

3. The believers also remembered their pastor, Paul, with the deepest affection. Note that they longed to see him just as he longed to see them.

"And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42).

APPLICATION:

What a dynamic testimony of strong faith, the kind of faith every believer and church should covet:

 \Rightarrow a faith that stands fast in the face of severe opposition.

⇒ a faith that demonstrates the love of God—agape love.

⇒ a faith that longs for fellowship with its pastor.

OUESTIONS

1. Your lifestyle, whether good or bad, bears testimony to the faith you have in Christ. Are you satisfied that your testimony is as good as it can be? How can you improve upon it?

2. Practicing your faith will draw you closer to other believers. Is your faith, or that of someone you know, a private one, so private that it does not reach out to others?

What kind of testimony does that give? Is that acceptable?

3. Does your faith in Christ stir a deep appreciation for God's minister? How do you treat your pastor: like a man who is unapproachable or like a brother who needs your fellowship? Do you demonstrate your love and concern for him?

What practical things can you do for your pastor to include him during your times of

fellowship?

4. A STRONG FAITH IS A FAITH THAT STIRS THE HEART OF ITS PASTOR AND FELLOW BELIEVERS (v.7-10).

What is a strong faith? A strong faith is a faith that stirs the heart of its pastor and fellow be-

lievers. Note four significant points.

1. The strong faith of the Thessalonian believers comforted Paul, and Paul desperately needed comforting (v.7). The word "comforted" means encouraged and strengthened. Why did Paul need encouragement and strengthening? It was not because of the Thessalonians, for Timothy's report had already comforted Paul's concern over them. Note: Paul said that he was in some "affliction and distress." The words are very strong. "Affliction" means choking, intense pressure and stress. "Distress" means crushing trouble. Remember Paul was in Corinth when Timothy arrived with the glorious news of the strong faith of the Thessalonians. A fierce persecution had broken out against Paul and the church in Corinth, and he was dragged by the Jewish religionists to stand trial before the Roman court. He was released, but the persecution against him and the church continued (Acts 18:1-17). Apparently some threat and savagery happened to Paul that is not recorded, as so much that happened to him is left unrecorded. But whatever it was, it brought great affliction and distress to Paul. The point is this: the testimony of the Thessalonians strengthened and encouraged Paul in his ministry. Their faith in Christ was strong, and God used the testimony of their faith to help His dear servant in a time of need.

APPLICATION:

What a lesson for us! Our faith is used by God to strengthen and encourage others in their need. Therefore, we must stand strong and grow stronger in our own faith day by day.

"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves" (Ro.15:1).

2. The strong faith of the Thessalonians stirred renewed life and purpose in Paul (v.8). Paul had been discouraged, not defeated, but discouraged because of the difficulties confronting him in Corinth. But when the news of the Thessalonian believers reached him, it ignited a renewed burst of life and purpose in him. He was stirred to minister and share Christ as never before.

APPLICATION:

Note how the Thessalonians were a testimony to Paul. They were suffering terrible persecution and remaining stedfast. Therefore, their stedfastness stirred him to bear the persecution launched against him. These dear people were a great encouragement to their pastor without their even knowing it. Their faithfulness was stirring him to be faithful—

stirring him in one of those times when he needed encouragement.

We never know when our strength and faith are needed to help some dear believer. Therefore, we must always stand fast in the faith, so that God can use our strength wherever He wishes. Imagine having the privilege of helping and encouraging a dear servant like Paul in one of his stressful times. Every church and believer has the privilege of helping and encouraging their pastor—if they will only stand fast in their faith, growing more and more in Christ.

"Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord" (Ro.12:11).

3. The strong faith of the Thessalonians stirred joy in Paul (v.9). Very simply, the news of the Thessalonian believers standing fast in their faith was bound to stir joy in their pastor's heart. He just burst forth praising and thanking God time and again.

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy" (1 Pt.4:12-13).

4. The strong faith of the Thessalonian believers stirred Paul to pray for their fellowship and growth in Christ. Paul longed to be with them so that he could continue to share and grow them in Christ. He wanted to build them up and perfect whatever weaknesses they might have. What a pastoral heart! The heart to always proclaim and teach Christ until we are all perfected into the image of Christ.

"Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification" (Ro.15:2).

ILLUSTRATION:

Does your faith ever stir other believers? Listen to this story from the life of the great missionary to inland China, Hudson Taylor:

"When Hudson Taylor...first went to China, it was in a sailing vessel. Very close to the shore of cannibal islands the ship was [calmed], and it was slowly drifting shoreward unable to go about, and the savages were eagerly anticipating a feast.

"The captain came to Mr. Taylor and besought him to pray for the help of God. 'I will,' said Taylor, 'provided you set your sails to catch the breeze.' The captain declined to make himself a laughing stock by unfurling in a dead calm. Taylor said, 'I will not undertake to pray for the vessel unless you will prepare the sails.' And it was done.

"While engaged in prayer, there was a knock at the door of his stateroom. "Who is there?" The captain's voice responded, 'Are you still praying for wind?"

'Yes.' 'Well,' said the captain, 'you'd better stop praying, for we have more wind than we can manage."

Has your faith been filling the sails of other believers?

OUESTIONS:

1. Even while going through a trial, do you try to lift up and encourage other believers? Or do you focus only on yourself?

2. Are you setting an example that challenges and builds up the faith of others? What

can you to do strengthen other believers?

3. Who do you look to as an example of faith? What traits stand out in his or her life? How can you strengthen your own faith?

SUMMARY:

You have learned that a true and strong faith is focused on the right person—upon the Lord Jesus Christ. In order to have a truth faith and to keep a strong faith, you need to remember the major points in this lesson:

1. A strong faith made Paul anxious for the church.

2. A strong faith is a faith that is not moved by afflictions.

3. A strong faith is a faith that gives forth an excellent testimony.

4. A strong faith is a faith that stirs the hearts of its pastor and fellow believers.

If you were to die today, what reason would you give for being allowed to enter Heaven?

PERSONAL JOURNAL NOTES: (Reflection & Response)

- 1. The most important thing that I learned from this lesson was:
- 2. The area that I need to work on the most is:
- 3. I can apply this lesson to my life by:
- 4. Closing Statement of Commitment:

Leon Morris. The Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians. "Tyndale New Testament Commentaries," p.63. Also A.T. Robertson. Word Pictures in the New Testament, Vol.4, p.25.

Craig B. Larson, Editor. Illustrations for Preaching & Teaching, p.77. A.T. Robertson. Word Pictures in the New Testament, Vol.4, p.26.

Oriental and Inter-American Missionary Standard. Paul Lee Tan. Encyclopedia of 7,700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times, p.403-404.

		3:11-13	and toward all men, even as we do toward you:	The Lord & His agape love
l.	The great prayer of Paul a. Was addressed to	11 Now God himself and our Father, and	13 To the end he may	3. The great result of love
	both God & Christ	our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto	unblameable in holi-	a. To be presented
	visit the church	you.	our Father, at the	God
2	The great need: Love	12 And the Lord make you to increase	coming of our Lord	
		and abound in love		turn of the Lord Je- sus Christ

Section I THE MODEL CHURCH 1 Thessalonians 1:1-3:13

Study 6: THE MODEL CHURCH: A STRONG LOVE

Text: 1 Thessalonians 3:11-13

Aim: To strive for a true love, a love that touches all men.

Memory Verse:

"And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you" (1 Thessalonians 3:12).

INTRODUCTION:

When you think of your neighbors, your co-workers, strangers, even enemies--do you think in terms of loving them? How you answer this question is a strong indicator of how mature your love is for God and for others. There are some who feel that God's love is only reserved for the "lovely"—those who are easy to love, that anyone who falls outside of that invisible line does not deserve to be loved by God nor by His people. But is God's love that limited in scope? Certainly not! Remember: "For God so loved the world." God's love flows over the walls that some people build and floods the souls of the lost with His mercy.

It is God's love that is to make the Christian believer distinctive from the rest of the people in the world. If you feel uncomfortable with loving those who are not easy to love, then you will

be challenged by these Scriptures.

The greatest virtue in the world is love. This is the one possession that man must have if he is to have an abundant life. Without love, man is nothing. Paul knew this; therefore, he went before God to pray that the Thessalonian church and its believers might grow in love more and more. The model church will be a church that has a strong love.

OUTLINE:

1. The great prayer of Paul (v.11).

The great need: love (v.12).
 The great result of love (v.13).

1. THE APOSTLE PAUL'S GREAT PRAYER (v.11).

1. Note to whom Paul prays. This is a power-packed point. Paul prays to both God and

Christ, and in so doing, he reveals who God is and who Christ is.

a. Paul prays to God Himself: the Supreme and Majestic Being of the universe, the Supreme Intelligence, the Creator and Maker of all things, the Giver and Sustainer of life and of everything else, the Person who dwells everywhere in perfect and supreme power, knowledge, and being.

Note that this is the only way some men picture God. They think of a God who

is in the heavens—in outer space someplace—a God who rules and reigns but is somewhat removed and not too interested in man. The point is this: Paul reveals that, yes, God is what some men think: supreme, majestic, ruling, and reigning.

But note the next point: God is more, much more.

b. Paul prays to God our Father. God is a Father to us, intimately involved in our lives. He is not just in outer space ruling and reigning and being far removed from us. God our Father is right here with us; He is actively participating in our lives just as an earthly father participates in the lives of his children. Therefore Paul, as a child, approaches God our Father to ask Him for certain things; and when he asks, he knows that his Father will hear and answer. He knows because God is not only able to answer, but God is his Father.

c. Paul prays to our Lord Jesus Christ. He prays...

• to our Lord, the Supreme Majestic Ruler of the universe who has existed eternally in heaven and who loves us enough to become our Lord.

to our Lord Jesus, the Lord from heaven who loved us enough to come to

earth in the person of Jesus, the Jewish carpenter from Nazareth.

 to our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord Jesus who was the promised Messiah and Savior of the world. (The word "Christ" means Messiah and Savior.)

The point is this: Paul revealed that God Himself is our Father and that Jesus Christ Himself is the Lord God from heaven—that both the Father and the Son have the nature of God; therefore, both have co-existed eternally. For this reason, Paul prayed to both God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. Paul asked the Father and the Lord Jesus to direct and guide his way to the Thessalonians. He wanted both God and the Lord Jesus working to open the door for him to return to the dear believers at Thessalonica. Remember: Satan had created some terrible problems and obstacles to keep Paul from returning to the church (1 Th.2:18; 3:7). But he longed to return; therefore, he wanted both the Father and Son working on the matter. Hence, he addressed the request to both.

OUESTIONS:

1. What are the key components that you noticed in Paul's prayer? How can you use these in your own personal prayer-time?

2. How would you evaluate your own personal prayer life? Is it:

____ Alive, active, growing?

____ Half-hearted, lukewarm, sporadic?

___ Dead?

3. How much time, thought, and effort do you put into your prayers for other believers, other churches? Or is your focus mainly on self and the things immediately surrounding your life?

4. Can you make your prayer-life more outward focused instead of inward focused?

In practical terms, how?

2. THE GREAT NEED: LOVE (v.12).

The great need for which Paul prayed is the supreme need of every believer—the need for love, to grow in love more and more.

⇒ The word "increase" means to abound, to multiply over and over.
⇒ The word "abound" means to excel and overflow (Amplified New Testament).

As stated, the great need is to grow in love—to abound and multiply—to excel and overflow in love. But note the crucial point: the love being spoken about is not what the world means by

love. This is seen in two significant points.

The love that we must grow in is the love that makes us love all men, not just one another. Note the verse: "The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men." The love we are to have is the love that reaches out and overflows and multiplies toward everyone. This means...

the unattractive

- the unclean

- the sinner
- the widow and widower
- the orphan

 the sick

 the hateful

 the hateful

 the enemy

 the enemy

 the diseased

 the widow and
 the widow and
 the opponent
 the opponent
 the dictator
 the diseased

How in the world can we love some of these people? How can we abound in love for them? How is it possible to love those who do evil to us and who treat us as enemies? Is it even practical to ask us to love all men? Is it even humanly possible? No! It is not possible for us to love those who hate us and who stand as enemies against us—not humanly possible. But there is a way. However, there is only one way. This is the subject of the next point.

The source of love is the Lord. There is no other source, not for the kind of love that can love all men. This is the reason Paul went before the Lord and requested such a love. Paul knew that it was impossible for him or the Thessalonians to work up the kind of love that could reach out and abound toward all men. A love that could love those who ignore, neglect, abuse, and shamefully treat us could only come from God. Note this: there are four kinds of love, the last of which is agape love, the very love of God Himself. It is this love that enables us to love all men. Agape love—the love that loves all men—is the kind of love that is to flood our hearts and lives—the kind of love that is to flow out toward all people no matter who they are.

"And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Mt.22:39).

OUESTIONS:

1. What is the source of a growing love?

2. Are you in enough contact with that source (the Lord) to be benefiting from His strength?

3. What barriers keep you from loving those who are outside of your 'comfort zone'?

A CLOSER LOOK:

(3:12) Love: the kind of love which the believer is to have for all people is agape love, the great love of God Himself. The meaning of agape love is more clearly seen by contrasting it with the other kinds of love. There are essentially four kinds of love. Whereas the English language has only one word for love to describe all the affectionate experiences of men, the Greek language had a different word to describe each kind of love or affectionate experience.

There is passionate love or 'eros' love. This is the physical love between sexes; the patriotic love of a person for his nation; the ambition of a person for power, wealth, or fame.

Briefly stated, eros love is the base love of a man that arises from his own inner passion. Sometimes eros love is focused upon good and other times it is focused upon bad. It should be noted that eros love is never used in the New Testament.

2. There is affectionate love or 'storge' love. This is the kind of love that exists between parent and child and between loyal citizens and a trustworthy ruler. Storge love is also not used

in the New Testament.

3. There is an endearing love or 'phileo' love. Phileo love is the love of a husband and wife for each other, of a brother for a brother, of a friend for the dearest of friends. It is the love that cherishes, that holds someone or something ever so dear to one's heart.

4. There is selfless and sacrificial love or 'agape' love. Agape love is the love of the

mind, of the reason, of the will. It is the love that goes so far...

• that it loves a person even if he does not deserve to be loved.

• that it actually loves the person who is utterly unworthy of being loved.

Note four significant points about agape love.

- a. Selfless or agape love is the love of God, the very love possessed by God Himself. It is the love demonstrated in the cross of Christ.
 - ⇒ It is the love of God for the ungodly.

"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly" (Ro.5:6).

⇒ It is the love of God for unworthy sinners.

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Ro.5:8).

⇒ It is the love of God for undeserving enemies.

"For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life" (Ro.5:10).

b. Selfless or agape love is a gift of God. It can be experienced only if a person knows God personally—only if a person has received the love of God into his heart and life. Agape love has to be shed abroad (poured out, flooded, spread about) by the Spirit of God within the heart of a person.

"And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Ro.5:5).

 Selfless or agape love is the greatest thing in all of life according to the Lord Jesus Christ.

"And Jesus answered him, The <u>first of all the commandments</u> is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the <u>first commandment</u>. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is <u>none other commandment</u> greater than these" (Mk.12:29-31).

Selfless or agape love is the greatest possession and gift in human life according to the Scripture (1 Cor. 13:1-13).

"And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity" (1 Cor.13:13).

ILLUSTRATION:

It is the love of God which binds us together. In a body of believers unified by love, every believer has a very special part to play in building up the church.

"Dr. Halbeck, a missionary of the Church of England in the South of Africa, from the top of a neighboring hill saw lepers at work. He noticed two particularly, sowing peas in the field. One had no hands; the other no feet-these members being wasted away by disease. The one who wanted the hands was carrying the other, who wanted the feet, upon his back; and he again carried the bag of seed, and dropped a pea every now and then, which the other pressed into the ground with his feet: and so they managed the work of one man between the two.

"Such should be the true union of the members of Christ's body, in which all the members should have the same care one for another."

The love of God will produce unity-people working as one. Are you working as an individual or as part of a team?

OUESTIONS:

Of the four types of love listed above, which is easiest to demonstrate? Which is hardest? Why?

Why is it important for believers to demonstrate agape love? How can you do it in

your day-to-day life?

3. Where do you see the best demonstration of agape love?

3. THE GREAT RESULT OF LOVE (v.13).

The great result of love is to be presented unblameable before God when Christ returns to

earth. This is the most glorious result imaginable. Note several striking facts.

The word "stablish" means to prop, support, confirm, fix, make fast, set. Note: it is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself who stablishes our hearts before God. No one else has the right or power to set us before God; no one else can make us acceptable to God. (Note: the word heart

here refers to the whole person or personality of man.)

The word "unblameable" means to be free from fault and blame; to be free from all charges.² The word "holiness" means to be set apart and separated to God. It is the Lord Jesus Christ who can make our hearts unblameable in holiness before God. He alone can free us from the faults and charges of sin; He alone can present us unblameable and holy before God. Just think about it: Who else has such power? Do you know such a person? The thinking and honest person has to answer, "No." And to be honest, if Christ does not have the righteousness and power to present us unblameable before God, then we are hopelessly doomed. Why? Because Christ is the only Person who has ever risen from the dead never to die again, but instead to live eternally with God. If He is not our Savior, then we shall die and never arise, never live with God. Man's only hope is Christ-that He truthfully has the righteousness and power to set us unblameable and holy before God.

3. When is this glorious presentation to God going to take place? When Christ returns with all His saints, that is, with all the "holy and glorified people of God." When Christ returns, He

will present all believers—every single one of us—to God:

⇒ all the believers who have died and gone to be with the Lord.

⇒ all the believers who are raptured when He returns.

What a coronation, the glorious day of our presentation before God—meeting Him face to face and being presented to Him unblameable and holy—to be with Him forever and ever! "The coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints" will take place! It is the promise of God Himself, and therefore it cannot be stopped! And no man should want to stop it. On the contrary, all men should prepare for and welcome it.

"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (Jn.14:2-3).

ILLUSTRATION:

Have you ever thought about what life is going to be like when Christ returns? Sometimes we get too busy and forget that He is preparing us daily to be just like Him. Charles Spurgeon, the great preacher from another generation, had this experience:

"Spurgeon received one day a copy of Andrew Bonar's commentary on Leviticus. Spurgeon was greatly blessed as he read it. He returned it to its author with this request: 'Dr. Bonar, please autograph this book, and paste your picture on the title page. Then return it to me.'

"Bonar did as requested. Below the picture he wrote, 'Dear Spurgeon: Here is the book with my autograph and my photograph. If you had been willing to wait a short season you could have had a better picture. When I see Christ, I shall be like

Him. '"4

If you are a Christian believer, take heart--God is working in you to make you more and more like Him every day!

OUESTIONS:

1. Why did God keep you on earth after He saved you?

2. How are you preparing yourself to meet God face to face?

3. When you think of being like Jesus one day, what areas of your life need a lot more work? Which areas are your working on?

4. If Jesus were to return today, would you be ready? Why or why not?

SUMMARY:

How strong is your love? It should be a love that reaches out to touch all men, a love that grows stronger and becomes more Christ-like every day. It is God's way of preparing you to be presented before Him holy and unblameable one day. Reinforce the truths of this session to your heart once again:

- 1. The great prayer of Paul.
 - 2. The great need: love.
 - 3. The great result of love.

The challenge for all of us is to put our love into action. May God give all of us the grace to love as Christian believers ought to love!

PERSONAL JOURNAL NOTES: (Reflection & Response)

	(Reflection & Response)
1.	The most important thing that I learned from this lesson was:
2.	The area that I need to work on the most is:
3.	I can apply this lesson to my life by:
4.	Closing Statement of Commitment:
1	Elon Foster, Editor. 6,000 Sermon Illustrations (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1992), p.428. Vine, W.E. Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words. (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Co.).
3	Vincent, Marvin R. Word Studies in the New Testament. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1969). Walter B. Knight. Walter B. Knight. Knight's Treasury of 2,000 Illustrations (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdman's Publishing Company, 1992), p.352.

	CHAPTER 4 II. THE MODEL WALK OR LIFE, 4:1-12	fornication: 4 That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour:	fornication b. Knowing how to control your body & spouse
		5 Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God:	
		6 That no man go be-	
1. The exhortation:		yond and defraud his	
The earnest but ten-		brother in any matter:	
der plea	and exhort you by the	because that the Lord	& wrongs a brother
W. H A 1 C-1	Lord Jesus, that as ye	is the avenger of all	
	have received of us how ye ought to walk		revenged by God
do so more & more	and to please God, so		
		7 For God hath not	c. Immorality is not
		called us unto un-	God's call; holiness
b. Keep the command-	2 For ye know what		is
ments given you by	commandments we gave		
the Lord Jesus		8 He therefore that	d. Immorality is a sin
2. The commandment:		despiseth, despiseth	against God
God's will is your	of God, even your		
sanctification		who hath also given	
a. Abstaining from	should abstain from	unto us his holy Spirit.	

Section II THE MODEL WALK OR LIFE 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12

Study 1: A WALK THAT PLEASES GOD (PART I): A LIFE OF MORAL PURITY

Text: 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8

Aim: To fight against immorality: To live a life of moral purity.

Memory Verse:

"For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness" (1 Thessalonians 4:7).

INTRODUCTION:

Have you ever muttered these words: "If only I could take back what I have done"? A man named John said the same thing. Even though he had a beautiful wife and two precious children, he was willing to risk all for a fleeting moment of passion with another woman. During the entire time of this illicit relationship, he found creative ways to justify his behavior.

After his sin was exposed, his fragile world exploded into a million pieces. His faithful wife was crushed. The two children cried over their fallen hero. John wished that he could die. He

was truly sorry for his sin against God and against his family.

This family was fortunate. Through marriage counseling and the support of their church family, John's family was glued back together again. They were able to overcome this moral earthquake to their family. Normally during these kind of earthquakes there are no survivors.

This begins a major new discussion in <u>First Thessalonians</u>—the model walk or life of the believer. The model believer walks to please God. What does this mean? It means that he lives as God tells him to live, that he keeps God's commandments. Six commandments in particular are covered, one in this passage and five in the next passage. But note where the emphasis is: it is on this passage, the passage where moral purity is discussed. Why is more emphasis given to the commandment on morality than to the others? The answer is obvious. Immorality is the rampaging monster that destroys more lives, families, and nations than any other single evil. What God has to say is strong, and it must be heeded by all.

OUTLINE:

1. The exhortation: The earnest, but tender plea (v.1-2).

2. The commandment: God's will is your sanctification (v.3-5).

3. The reasons for purity (v.6-8).

1. THE EXHORTATION: THE EARNEST BUT TENDER PLEA (v.1-2).

The earnest plea was to walk to please God, and do so more and more. The Christian life is often described as a walk. Walking is a picture of moving forward and progressing step by step and day by day. It pictures the utter necessity of pleasing God every step of the day as we walk through life. God is interested in every step we take. And He is going to judge us on the basis of how we live and walk. Therefore, the primary concern of our lives must be to please God.

⇒ If we please God, we will be accepted by God.

⇒ If we do not please God, we will not be accepted by God.

This alone shows the utter necessity of pleasing God. We must please Him if we wish to be accepted by Him. A person is foolish not to want to be accepted by God, for to be rejected by God leads to the worst consequences that can be imagined: rejection by God Himself. Note how

tender, yet strong, this exhortation is.

1. The tenderness is seen in the words "beseech" and "brothers." By calling believers "brothers," Paul was expressing deep affection and care for them. The word "beseech" means to ask or request. But note: it always has a sense of urgency about it. Paul was tenderly requesting his dear brothers to continue to please God in their daily walk, but it was an urgent request. Their walking to please God was an absolute necessity, a necessity that carried with it great blessings for obedience and terrible judgment for disobedience (the displeasure of God).

2. The strength of the exhortation is seen in the following facts.

a. The believers had been taught how they must walk and please God. They had sat under the teachers and preachers of the Word; therefore, they were without excuse, for they knew exactly how to live and to please God. The word "ought" means must; it is an imperative, a necessity. Once the believers had heard and been taught how they should live and please God, they were responsible to live that way. Pleasing God was not an option; it was a duty.

The exhortation was based upon the Lord Jesus. It was what the Lord Himself had taught. There is no greater authority than the Lord. He is the supreme majestic Being of the universe; therefore, the exhortation to live and walk to please God is

of the highest authority.

c. The exhortation involves the actual commandments of the Lord Jesus. This is a repeat of verse one: keeping the commandments of the Lord Jesus is not an option. A commandment is a commandment, a law that is to be obeyed. In addition, it has been given by the Lord Himself. Therefore, it must be kept—regardless. We must walk and please God, and we must grow in our Christian walk day by day more and more.

ILLUSTRATION:

Do not let down your guard. Never fool yourself with the idea that you are above such immoral behavior. Your walk is not to be founded upon pride but upon the mercy

and grace of God.

Years ago, a German teenager flew an airplane from Germany to the heart of Moscow, Russia. He was able to fly completely unnoticed through the finest radar technology that money could buy. He landed his plane on the historic Red Square in Moscow, all to the amazement of the world and to the embarrassment of the Russian military.

There is a lesson in this event for all who seek not to live a life of moral purity. The lesson is: <u>DO NOT LET DOWN YOUR GUARD</u>—not even for a moment. Keep a watchful vigil for any incoming hostile temptation. The German teenager was harmless. Do not let slackness lull you towards a deadly complacency. An unexpected moment of temptation could confront you today.

OUESTIONS:

1. What safeguards do you have in place to protect you from immorality? What cir-

cumstances would cause these safeguards to fail?

2. Has anything happened this past week, whether innocently or otherwise, that could have compromised your witness? If so, how could the situation have been handled differently?

3. As you think about pleasing God, what are your biggest concerns? With what area

do you have the most trouble? How can you get help?

2. THE COMMANDMENT: GOD'S WILL IS YOUR SANCTIFICATION (v.3-5).

The major commandment is sanctification, that is, moral purity. It can be stated no clearer: "This is the will of God." There is no higher will than the will of God. When the will of God is known, then the will of God must be done. The word sanctification means to be set apart and separated. We are to be set apart to God and His will, and His will is moral purity. Therefore, we are to be set apart to live pure lives before God. This means three things.

1. Sanctification means abstaining from fornication. The word "fornication" means all kinds of immoral sexual acts: adultery, pre-marital sex, homosexuality, and all forms of sexual

deviation.

The believer is not to give his body to an immoral person, not to an harlot or to an immoral neighbor. The believer's body belongs to Christ, which means that we are to honor Christ with our bodies. We are to take the sexual drive and energy of our bodies and use them as He has instructed:

⇒ either we dedicate our bodies solely to Him as eunuchs;

⇒ or we marry and build a family with the dynamic virtues of love and care, trust and

loyalty.

2. Sanctification means that a person knows how to control his body and his spouse. The word "vessel" can refer either to a person's own body or to a person's spouse. Both hold great meaning for the Christian believer. A believer is to know how to control his own body and how to control his spouse. A person can neglect, ignore, and abuse his body and a person can neglect, ignore, and abuse his or her spouse. In discussing a person's spouse, it is important to note 1 Cor.7:4-5. Neglecting, ignoring, or abusing one's spouse can bring about temptation and can contribute significantly to the spouse's becoming unfaithful and impure.

Note that the believer is to know, to possess his or her body and spouse in sanctification and honor. There is no excuse for ignorance in this matter nor for disobedience. The believer is to

know...

• beyond a shadow of a doubt

• without equivocation

without question

...that it is his duty to keep his body and his spouse pure.

The point is strong: it is unthinkable that a believer would engage in fornication, that he would bring dishonor to his Lord and to his spouse, family, and himself. The believing husband and wife are to know that they must keep themselves and each other in sanctification and honor. They must not set themselves apart to dishonorable and immoral neighbors nor to harlots.

"I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness" (Ro.6:19).

APPLICATION:

This is an area of the believer's life which is won or lost by what happens in the mind. The battle for our thought life is ever-present. When we let down our guard, our minds become filled with the putrid garbage of illicit sex through films, T.V., pornographic materials, off-colored talk, and a host of other things.

"For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication" (1 Th.4:3).

- 3. Sanctification means resisting the passion of lust. We must resist the passion of lust. Note the double emphasis, that is, the wording, "the lust of concupiscence." It means the passion of lust, the enslaving power of lust. When a person begins to lust, he can soon become enslaved to lust; he can be held by the grip of lust to such a degree that it is almost impossible to break the bondage. This is true with the...
 - passion for sex.
 - passion for pornographic films and literature.
 - passion for manipulation.
 - passion for exposure.
 - passion for sexual conquest.
 - passion for looking.
 - passion for touching.
 - passion for romantic and immoral reading.

The passion of lust is the way of the world. It is not the way of God. It is the lifestyle of those who do not know God. This does not mean that they do not know that sexual immorality is wrong. It means that they have rejected God and His commandments; they have chosen to live in the passion of their lusts. The believer is commanded to please God and to keep the commandments of the Lord Jesus. And the major commandment is our sanctification, that is, moral purity. Therefore, we are to abstain from fornication—from all forms of immoral sex (cp. Ro.1:18-32).

"But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (Jas.1:14-15).

ILLUSTRATION:

What is called 'popular' in your culture is not always the best option for the believer.

"A man living in a forested area found his home overrun with mice—too many to exterminate with traps. So he bought a few boxes...[of poison] and distributed them around the house, including one under his bed. That night he couldn't believe his ears; below him was a feeding frenzy.

"In the morning he checked the box and found it licked clean. Just to make sure the plan worked, he bought and placed another box. Again, the mice went for

the flavored poison like piranha.

"But the tasty and popular nighttime snack did its deadly work. In the days that followed, all was quiet. Just because something is popular doesn't mean it's good for you. In fact, it can be deadly—like sin."²

OUESTIONS:

1. To what degree does God expect you to be sanctified, that is, morally pure?

2. Is it possible to be morally pure in an evil, corrupt society? How?

3. How do you overcome lustful thoughts? What practical things can you do in order to break the power of lust?

4. What sort of attitude are you to have toward the immorality of others?

3. THE REASONS FOR PURITY (v.6-8).

There are four reasons why we are to live pure lives, and the reasons stand as a severe

warning to us.

1. Immorality defrauds and cheats a brother. Fornication steals from a person. It either takes the wife from her husband or else it takes the husband from his wife. It is that simple—that tragic—that terrible. It steals one of the two major partners of a family, steals...

• the heart

- the body
- the affection
- the innocence
- the thoughts
- the trust and trustworthiness

• the purity

And the terrible tragedy is that none of these can ever be recovered—not completely, not fully. Once the heart, affection, thoughts, purity, body, innocence, and trust have been lost, they are lost and affected forever thereafter. The marriage and its bond of trust are gone forever. The pain and hurt always linger to some degree, and the commitment and ability to totally surrender to the spouse always suffers to some degree. This is the reason God allows divorce after fornication has been committed within marriage. (Note: God allows divorce; He does not command it. All parties involved in fornication—no matter the situation—should stay together if the injured spouse can bear the pain long enough to recover and begin to rebuild the relationship.)

Note this: the same effects take place upon the unmarried when they commit fornication. The person who seduces the unmarried steals from the person seduced and from the future spouse—

steals the person's heart, affection, thoughts, purity, body, innocence, and trust.

"Let love be without dissimulation [hypocrisy]. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another" (Ro.12:9-10).

- 2. Immorality will be revenged by God. This point needs to be heeded, especially in a promiscuous society where immorality is not only accepted but also encouraged. How can we dare say that immorality is accepted and encouraged in any society? Compare the emphasis and appeal of...
 - dress in public and on the beach.
 - television and films.
 - books and magazines.
 - advertisements and promotions.
 - conversations and jokes.
 - suggestive words and actions that are acceptable today.

The list could go on and on, but the point is this: God is going to judge immoral behavior no matter how much society accepts it. Society does not make the rules for man's behavior; God makes the rules. He has given the intimacy and preciousness of sex for marriage and only for

marriage. And He has made it perfectly clear that any sex outside of marriage will not only be judged, but He will personally avenge the guilty party. Why? Because the guilty party...

stole the life of a person.

• broke the person's trust and innocence for the rest of his or her life.

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness" (Ro.1:18).

3. Immorality is not God's call; holiness is. When God calls us to salvation, He does not call us to live unclean lives, giving us the license to go from person to person. Such immorality...

destroys genuine love for self and for others.

destroys trust and trustworthiness of self and of others.

destroys discipline and control of self and of others.

destroys true care and concern for self and for others.

destroys ego and esteem of self and of others.

destroys confidence and assurance in self and in others.

destroys loyalty and commitment within self and within others.

destroys freedom and will within self and within others.

destroys justice and fair treatment of others.

destroys family and nation.

God would never call a person to do such terrible things. God calls us to holiness—to live lives that are set apart to Him and to purity, to our spouses and families. God calls us to build strong characters and communities, strong families and nations. God calls us to holiness so that we can be strong enough to reach out to a world that reels under the awful weight of suffering and death. There is hope; there is salvation from evil and suffering, from death and judgment. But we must be sanctified and holy, totally set apart to building the strongest characters and families, communities and societies possible in order to reach the world.

⇒ Again, God does not call us to uncleanness and disintegration of character and society.

God calls us to holiness.

"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor.7:1).

4. Immorality is a sin against God. The word "despiseth" means to reject. Most persons reject this commandment of God as being old fashioned and unacceptable in an intellectual and enlightened society. But note what Scripture says: the person who rejects this commandment is rejecting God, not some man. The idea is that the preacher or teacher may be able to do little to us if we disregard the commandment. But God can take vengeance, and He will. Every human being who ever breaks the commandment shall receive the vengeance of God—unless he has repented and sought the forgiveness of God.

"Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children: which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray" (2 Pt.2:14-15).

APPLICATION:

Ultimately, all sin is against God. When we turn our heart toward sin, we just hammer another nail into the cross of Calvary.

"Against Thee, Thee only, I have sinned, and done what is evil in Thy sight, so that Thou art justified when Thou dost speak, and blameless when Thou dost judge" (Ps.51:4 --NASB).

Note this also: God has given believers the Holy Spirit. The very presence of God in all His majesty dwells within our bodies. We must not, therefore, dirty our bodies with a harlot or some immoral and destructive neighbor. The majesty of God Himself must not be defiled. The Holy Spirit—He who is holy—is within us. We must, therefore, keep our bodies holy.

OUESTIONS:

1. Why does God have a right to give such severe warnings to His children? What does this tell you about God's character?

2. What things have to happen for a marriage to be saved after there has been forni-

cation? What is God's will for marriages that have been broken?

3. Do you ever experience feelings of moral weakness? What can you do to overcome these feelings?

4. Why do some people think that their own personal sin is their own business and does not affect anyone else? Explain why they are wrong.

SUMMARY:

Have you been trying to live a pure, moral life in your own strength? No man can succeed when playing by these rules. In order to walk in a way that will please God, you must ask Him for His power.

"Samuel Pearce...at the time of his conversion...resolved to formally dedicate himself to the Lord. He drew up a covenant; and, to make it more solemn and binding, he

signed it with blood drawn from his own body.

"But afterwards, failing in his vows, he was plunged into great distress. Driven, therefore, into a more complete examination of his motives, he was led to see that he had been relying too much on his own strength; and, carrying the blood-signed covenant to the top of his father's house, he tore it into pieces and scattered it to the winds, and resolved...to depend upon the peace-making and peace-keeping blood of Christ."

You place your confidence in the blood of Christ when you embrace these major points from this lesson:

1. The exhortation: The earnest but tender plea to please God.

2. The commandment: God's will is your sanctification.

3. The reasons for purity.

PERSONAL JOURNAL NOTES: (Reflection & Response)

1. The most important thing that I learned from this lesson was:

1 ITESSA	ALONIANS 4:1-8	
2. The area that I need to work on the most	is:	
3. I can apply this lesson to my life by:		
Clasina Statement of Commitment		
1. Closing Statement of Commitment:		
Leon Morris. The Epistles of Paul to the	Thessalonians. "Tyndale New Testam	ent Commen-
taries," p.75. Craig B. Larson, Editor. <i>Illustrations for</i>	Preaching & Teaching, p.227.	
Elon Foster, Editor. 6,000 Sermon Illustr	rations, p.61.	

	Pleases God (Part II): Four Practical	Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more	
	Duties, 4:9-12	and more; 11 And that ye study to be quiet, and to do	2. Study to be quiet 3. Do your own busi-
more	brotherly love ye need	your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we	ness 4. Work with your own
a. Because you are taught by God to love	you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to	commanded you; 12 That ye may walk	a. That you may walk
b. Because you need to continually grow in love	10 And indeed ye do	honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack	outsiders
III IOAC	ren which are in all		no necessity

Section II THE MODEL WALK OR LIFE 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12

Study 2: A WALK THAT PLEASES GOD (PART II): FOUR PRACTICAL DUTIES

Text: 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12

Aim: To walk faithfully day by day, ever conscious of pleasing God.

Memory Verse:

"But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another" (1 Thessalonians 4:9).

INTRODUCTION:

Any organization worth its salt supplies a job description for each of its employees. A well-written job description allows the employee to know exactly what kind of work his employer is expecting from him. This crucial document of communication is a handy tool to have around when memories begin to fade from initial agreements.

In the same sense, God has given to each believer a job description. In case we forget what to do, God has provided a job description to jog our memory. This passage gives four very practical

ways that we can please God, four practical duties that must be obeyed.

OUTLINE:

- 1. Grow in love more and more (v.9-10).
- 2. Study to be quiet (v.11).
- 3. Do your own business (v.11).
- 4. Work with your own hands (v.11-12).

1. GROW IN LOVE MORE AND MORE (v.9-10).

In the Greek, the word "love" is not the word that is usually used for love. The word that is usually used for Christian love is agape, but the word used here is *philadelphia*, a very special kind of love. The word means brotherly love, the very special love that exists between the brothers and sisters within a loving family, brothers and sisters who truly cherish each other. It is the kind of love...

- that binds individuals together as a family, as a brotherly clan.
- that binds individuals in an unbreakable union.

that holds others ever so deeply within the heart.

• that knows deep affection for others.
• that nourishes and nurtures others.

that nourishes and nurtures others.

that shows concern and looks after the welfare of others.

• that joins hands with others in a common purpose under one father. 1

Note: Paul says there is no need for him to exhort the Thessalonians to love each other as brothers. Nevertheless, he does. Why? If there is no need, why does he encourage them to love each other? There are two reasons.

1. It was God who taught the Thessalonians to love each other. Therefore, as God's servant, Paul was driven to follow God, to stir the people of God to continue to love each other as brothers.

This was and still is an absolute essential for the church.

a. Christian believers need each other in order to make it through life. Living for Christ is not easy in a corrupt world that offers the bright lights of pleasure but ends up in suffering and death. We all face temptation after temptation and trial after trial. We need the love of one another in order to stand against the temptations and to walk through the sufferings of life.

The greatest threat to the church is that of internal strife and divisiveness. Nothing destroys the ministry of a church any quicker than criticism, grumbling, murmuring, gossiping, selfishness, cliquishness, and ambitiousness to have one's own way or to

secure some position.

The point is this: God actually teaches believers to love one another as brothers. This means that God works within our hearts and arouses that thought within our minds. Therefore, we are to grab hold of that thought and that stirring within our hearts and love one another.

2. There is always the need to grow in love more and more. Note: the Thessalonian believers were noted for their love, not only within their own church, but throughout the whole district or state of Macedonia. But they were not yet perfected in love. No person is; therefore, there is always the need to continually grow and abound in love. There is never too much brotherly love within the church or the world. We must, therefore, grow more and more in love.

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (Jn.13:34-35).

ILLUSTRATION:

Scripture declares one simple truth: believers are to love one another, love one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. We are foolish to think that we can excuse or exempt ourselves from God's teaching.

Years ago, a church family fell between the cracks of Christian care. You may know a family just like this. They were committed believers who sincerely wanted to serve God and live for Him. Through a series of unfortunate circumstances, this family became one of the statistics of life. The breadwinner had lost his job and for nine months was out of work. He mailed resumes across the country, but to no avail.

During this difficult time, the leaders of their church failed to reach out to them. Because of the church's inability to demonstrate love, this family teetered on the edge of both financial and spiritual ruin. It was only the grace of God that kept them

from falling off the deep end.

What happened to this family is not unique at all. Mistakenly, some equate spiritual leadership with spiritual maturity. Just because someone is an officer in the church, it cannot be assumed that he knows how to love those who are in need.

More often than not, he does not love because he himself was never taught how to love.

Look at your own church: if the leaders are ministering in love, the followers will do the same. If you were in trouble, would your church, your leaders, your brothers and sisters in Christ reach out in love to help you?

OUESTIONS:

1. What types of things do you need to work on in order to love others better?

2. What attitude are you supposed to have when God wants to teach you how to love?

3. Think of a time when you failed to receive the love you needed. What would have made things different for you?

1. If you were to be graded on a test entitled: "Love One Another," what kind of grade

would you receive?

A I'm making the most of every single day!
B I've made good on several opportunities.
C I've done nothing exciting, kind of average.

D I've overlooked several opportunities.

F What test?

5. What can you do to help your church become a more loving church?

2. STUDY TO BE QUIET (v.11).

The word *study* means to be ambitious, to strive eagerly, to seek with all the energy a person has. The very meaning of the word *study* shows the supreme importance of quietness. We must seek to be quiet and learn to be quiet. Remember the church at Thessalonica was facing two criti-

cal problems.

1. It was facing the problem of persecution (1 Th.1:6; 2:14). Fellow-workers, neighbors, and the public at large were ridiculing, mocking, and abusing the believers because of their faith and commitment to Christ. Most of the believers were standing fast against the persecution, but some misunderstood how they were to show their loyalty to Christ. When a believer is rejected or persecuted, Christ says that he is to quietly shake the dust of the place off his feet, turn, and walk away (Mt.10:14; Mk.6:4). Note: the whole thrust of the Lord's teaching in handling rejection and persecution is quietness, to leave the rejecters alone. But apparently, some of the Thessalonian believers were doing the very opposite: they were standing toe to toe with their neighbors and fellow-workers and continuing to witness and proclaim the gospel. They were going too far and creating a noisy scene and embarrassing people.

2. The church was also facing the problem of some criticism and divisiveness against Paul. Some were accusing Paul of everything ranging from immoral conduct to deceitful and self-

seeking preaching (1 Th.2:3f).

The point is this: we are to live a quiet and peaceable life before each other. We are not to be critical and divisive toward each other. We are to walk in a quiet and meek spirit out in the world. We are not to be abusive and arrogant in witnessing and in dealing with the world.

APPLICATION:

Note four thought-provoking points.

1. A believer who is hurting needs to be heard, and the only way he can be heard is for us to be quiet and listen to him.

The world is hurting—everyone in the world has some hurt. Therefore, we must be quiet and listen for the hurt so that we can do what Christ said: minister to them.

3. The world needs the gospel, but the gospel cannot be effectively proclaimed in the midst of noise—not effectively and not in an appealing way. Noise pierces the ear and distracts. There must be quietness of atmosphere and mind for the gospel to have its most effective impact.

4. Believers must study to be quiet instead of studying to be critical and divisive—study to be quiet at home, school, work, play, and church.

"Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than a house full of sacrifices with strife" (Pr.17:1).

OUESTIONS:

1. Do you ever feel like your needs are not being heard? Why? How does it make you feel?

2. What can you do that will make you a better listener?

3. Who is the best *listener* that you know? What traits does he or she have that would help mature you as a better listener?

3. DO YOUR OWN BUSINESS (v.11).

Can you believe the Word of God says this? God actually tells us to mind our own business. Why? Because too many people are busybodies and meddle in the affairs of others. What is it that causes a person to meddle in the business of others?

⇒ A person meddles because he is critical by nature. Through the years the person has criticized and murmured and talked about others so much that to meddle is just a

way of life for him. The person has become a busybody by nature.

⇒ A person meddles because he fails to see his own shortcomings and failures. The busybody is always looking for the splinters (faults) in the lives of others when he

has a beam in his own life (Mt.7:2).

⇒ A person meddles because he fails to look after his own affairs like he should. A person should always be developing personally and growing as a Christian, looking after his own affairs. Therefore, when he meddles in the affairs of others, he is neglecting his own business and the work God has given him to do.

⇒ A person meddles because he does not have enough to do. He has not committed himself to God—not enough to keep himself busy. He does not have enough to oc-

cupy his time and efforts.

What the busybody needs is to commit his life to Christ. The busybody needs to commit his life to undertake the mission of Christ. He needs to become so occupied with the things of Christ that he has no time to meddle in the affairs of others. The exhortation is strong: "do your own business"—commit your time and energy to your own calling, the business God has given you to do.

"And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves" (1 Th.5:13).

OUESTIONS:

1. What causes someone to be a busybody?

2. What is a busybody's greatest need?

3. How are you to react to people who are busybodies?

4. How can you help a busybody?

5. How can you keep from becoming a busybody?

4. WORK WITH YOUR OWN HANDS (v.11-12).

The message of the gospel and of Christ's return to earth is a shocking message. The gospel declares...

• that a man can live forever.

 that Jesus Christ is coming back to earth to make a new heavens and earth that will be perfect.

that all who truly believe in Christ will be the citizens of the new heavens and earth, worshipping and serving God the Father forever and ever.

As stated, the gospel is shocking to the world, but it offers great hope to the person who believes. The Thessalonian believers became excited over the return of the Lord and the promise of being with Him eternally in the new heavens and earth. They became so excited that they began to sacrifice all they could to meet the needs of people. But some went too far. Some quit their jobs in order to have more time to minister and, in an act of sacrificial commitment, they gave away all they had. The result was catastrophic. They were now having to sponge off the other believers in order to survive. Their action had been most unwise. Therefore, Paul commanded them: "work with your own hands"—quit sponging off others. Two reasons are given for labor.

1. We must labor in order to walk honestly before outsiders, that is, before the world of unbelievers. The word "honestly" means to work in a commendable and respectful way. Few in the world respect those who do not work. Of all people, Christians must set a dynamic example of

work. One of the very purposes for which man has been put on earth is to work.

a. Man is to work to subdue and gain dominion over the earth in all its unregulated and catastrophic forces.

"And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and <u>subdue it</u>: and <u>have dominion</u> over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth" (Gen.1:28).

b. Man is to work to provide the necessities of life for all men.

"And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it" (Gen.2:15).

c. Man is to work in order to have enough to give to the needy of the world.

"Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth" (Eph.4:28).

- 2. We must labor in order to have enough to meet the necessities of life. As believers, we are never to lack anything—not a single thing that we need. We have two remarkable things providing for us:
 - ⇒ our own mind and energy.

⇒ God Himself.

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Mt.6:33).

APPLICATION:

The exhortation is clear. God has no patience with people who do not work. All persons are placed on earth to contribute and to help meet the catastrophic and desperate needs of men. There is no place for the inactive person in God's plan for the earth. The inactive, lazy, complacent—all are to hear the clear command of God: "Work with your own hands."

"Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth" (Eph.4:28).

ILLUSTRATION:

In every generation, there are some people within every community and church who are lazy and do not work. These people would much rather exist on the social programs of the government or on the benevolence of churches and social ministries. They would rather be leaches than to work and earn enough to help the truly disabled and needful. Listen to this:

Ted had bought into the idea that God would provide all his needs as long as he recited his prayer list in the right way. He felt that God owed him a lot since he was, after all. serving God.

He had it all figured out. "Why should I work? My church and friends will see my needs and send me all that I need." Ted had been let go by his former company and only looked for a job when people asked him 'personal' questions like: "When is

the last time you looked for work?'

Ted was offered several jobs, but he did not feel led to accept them because it would mean a change in his previous life-style. It was beneath him to do 'blue collar' work. "God understands. He wants to bless me with a job that will make me look successful. And it won't hurt His image either," thought Ted on more than one occasion.

As this went on, it was as if God had taken His hand and turned off the money supply to Ted. All of the giving that he had taken for granted had dried up. God refused to allow His people to support Ted's habit of slothfulness any more. Did Ted get the message? No! He shook his fist at God, accusing God of lying, "You did not take care of my needs!"

Of course, what Ted failed to comprehend was that God had provided several

doors for him to knock on. Ted just refused to go to the door.

"You ask and do not receive, because you ask with the wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures" (Jas.4:3, NASB).

QUESTIONS:

1. Why does God put such a high level of priority on using our own hands for work?

2. How do you feel about people who are able to work but do not work?

3. What role can your church play in helping people who are out of work to find jobs?

SUMMARY:

There should be no doubt about what God requires from you as a Christian believer. Your heart should be enflamed with a passion to please Him as you walk with Him day by day. Remember the four practical duties of this Scripture:

1. Grow in love more and more.

2. Study to be quiet.

3. Do your own business.

4. Work with your own hands.

PERSONAL JOURNAL NOTES: (Reflection & Response)

(Menteen)	ii & Response)
1. The most important thing that I learned from	n this lesson was:
2. The area that I need to work on the most is:	
3. I can apply this lesson to my life by:	
4. Closing Statement of Commitment:	
4. Closing Statement of Communicity.	
Leon Morris. The Epistles of Paul to the Th	essalonians. "Tyndale New Testament Commen-
taries, p.ou.	

III. THE COMING AGAIN OF JE-SUS CHRIST. 4:13-5:28

A. The Lord's Return & the Resurrection, 4:13-5:3

13 But I would not Lord in the air: and so have you to be igno-shall we ever be with rant, brethren, con-cerning them which 18 Wherefore comfort are asleep, that ye sor- one another with these row not, even as oth-words. ers which have no

14 For if we believe

bring with him.

prevent

which are asleep.

shall

hope.

b. Are not to sorrow & grieve excessively 2. The fact: Departed

1. The concern: Will

urrection

returns?

believers be resur-

rected when Christ

a. Are not to be igno-

rant about the res-

- believers will return with Christ
- a. Proof 1: Departed believers are with
- b. Proof 2: The death & resurrection of Christ
- c. Proof 3: The Word of the Lord
- 3. The events of the Lord's return
 - a. The Lord Himself

shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in clouds, to meet the

CHAPTER 5

that Jesus died and But of the times and 4. The time of the rose again, even so the seasons, brethren, them also which sleep ye have no need that I Jesus will God write unto you.

2 For yourselves know 15 For this we say perfectly that the day unto you by the word of the Lord so cometh of the Lord, that we as a thief in the night. which are alive and 3 For when they shall remain unto the com-say, Peace and safety; ing of the Lord shall then sudden destructhem tion cometh upon them, as travail upon a 16 For the Lord him-lwoman with descend and they shall not esfrom heaven with a cape.

- shall descend from heaven
- b. The dead in Christ shall rise first
- c. The living shall be caught up next
- d. The great reunion of the living with the dead shall occur
- e. The experience of living face to face with the Lord shall begin
- f. The present exhortation: Comfort one another
- Lord's return & of the Day of the Lord
- a. A fact that should not have to be discussed
- b. A day that shall come suddenly & unexpectedly
- c. A day of false security
- d. A day of terrible destruction & tra-
- e. A day of no escape

Section III THE COMING AGAIN OF JESUS CHRIST 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:28

THE LORD'S RETURN AND THE RESURRECTION Study 1:

1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:3 Text:

To stand warned: Christ's return is imminent; He can return any moment.

Memory Verse:

Aim:

"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him" (1 Thessalonians 4:14).

INTRODUCTION:

Ever since Christ left the earth and ascended into heaven, the church has been waiting for His return. Like a nervous bride awaiting her cue to march down the isle and take the arm of her groom, believers are waiting for the glorious day when Christ will come for them.

That wedding day is coming soon. Will you be ready to march when the cue comes? No one can afford to be late for this wedding of all ages. Do not become weary in your waiting: the

Groom is coming for you.

This passage begins a new subject, a subject that intrigues people and offers the most glorious hope to man and his world. The subject is the return of Jesus Christ to earth and the resurrection of the dead. It is a subject that men must study and heed, for the return of the Lord will not only bring blessings to believers, it will launch the most terrifying judgment upon unbelievers.

OUTLINE:

The concern: Will believers be resurrected when Christ returns (v.13)?

The fact: Departed believers will return with Christ (v.14-15).

3. The events of the Lord's return (v.16-18).

The time of the Lord's return and of the Day of the Lord (ch.5:1-3).

1. THE CONCERN: WILL BELIEVERS BE RESURRECTED WHEN CHRIST RE-**TURNS (v.13)?**

The concern of the believers at Thessalonica involved dead believers. Would their loved ones who had died share in the resurrection when Christ returned to earth? Remember: the church at Thessalonica had just been founded; it was brand new. It was also being bitterly persecuted and was under savage attack. Some of the believers were dying; perhaps some were even being martyred, and Christ had not yet returned. They were eagerly looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of Jesus Christ. Would believers be resurrected when Christ returned? The Thessalonian believers knew the gospel just as we know it: the gospel proclaims that Jesus Christ is returning to earth to receive believers unto Himself. When He returns to earth, we know...

that living believers will be lifted up to meet Christ in the air.

that all the glory, majesty, dominion, and power of God will be displayed in the heavens in the most spectacular scene imaginable.

that the most glorious union and fellowship among living believers will take place

around Christ.

that believers who are lifted up will experience the most wonderful transformation and be given bodies that are perfected forever.

that the world of unbelievers who are left here on earth will witness the most spectacular event ever seen by man.

But what about our loved ones who have already died? What will happen to them? Will they have a part in the spectacular return of Jesus Christ to earth? Will they have the privilege of sharing in the majestic display of God's power and in the glorious reunion of living believers with Christ? And how about their bodies? We know that our bodies—the bodies of believers who are living when Christ returns—will be transformed. They will never lie in the ground to decay and deteriorate. But what about the bodies of our loved ones who have already decayed? What about the bodies who are scattered over the world due to war, disease, or accident? Are they going to share in the glorious resurrection and transformation when Christ returns?

All kinds of concerns about the resurrection arose in the minds of the Thessalonian believers, just as they do in the minds of believers in every generation. Note that the word concern is being used instead of questions. The Thessalonians were concerned over their loved ones who had died, not curious. They were asking questions about the resurrection and the Lord's return out of

concern, not out of curiosity. Unfortunately, this is not the case with many persons who want to know about the end time out of curiosity, not out of concern. The very fact that Christ is returning should arouse the most urgent concern in us just as it did with the Thessalonian believers. Paul says two striking things to those who are concerned over the resurrection of dead believers when Christ returns.

First, do not be ignorant about the resurrection. Study and grasp what God teaches and be

comforted and challenged in the glorious hope He gives.

Second, do not grieve excessively over loved ones who die before Christ returns. We are bound to experience some sorrow and grief, but we are not to suffer grief like unbelievers who have no hope. They have reason to suffer the most terrible sorrow and grief, but not us. We have hope. William Barclay shows just how hopeless the world of unbelievers is by quoting several ancient writers:

⇒ "Once a man dies there is no resurrection" (Aeschylus).

⇒ "There is hope for those who are alive, but those who have died are without hope" (Theocritus).

⇒ "When once our brief light sets, there is one perpetual night through which we

must sleep" (Catullus).

⇒ "I was not; I became; I am not; I care not" (an ancient tombstone).

⇒ "Irene to Taonnophris and Philo, good comfort. I was as sorry and wept over the departed one as I wept for Didymas. And all things whatsoever were fitting, I did....But nevertheless against such things one can do nothing. Therefore, comfort one another" (an ancient letter).¹

There is absolutely no hope for the unbelievers of the world. But there is glorious hope for the believer. Therefore, we are not to grieve excessively at the death of loved ones. There is no need, for they shall arise to meet the great God and our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the glorious message of Christ's followers.

ILLUSTRATION:

One of the great hopes of the Christian believer is the hope of the resurrection.

"There is a story that once a party of sailors on shore on some island of the sea, ate freely of some plant that threw them into a deep sleep. As they returned not, others came in search of their companions, and found them lying apparently dead.

"Anxiously they set to work to rouse the drugged sleepers, and the recovery of the

first was a glad omen that the rest...would revive, as in time they did."2

You have no need to worry about the fate of those saints who have fallen asleep in Christ. They will rise again!

OUESTIONS:

1. What was the primary concern of the Thessalonians? What did Paul say to comfort them? How can you apply that same comfort to your concerns?

2. What does this verse teach about trusting God?

3. How should this impact your Christian witness on a daily basis?

2. THE FACT: DEPARTED BELIEVERS WILL RETURN WITH CHRIST (v.14-15).

There are three proofs of this great fact given.

1. Proof one: departed believers are with Christ; they are living with Him face to face.

a. Note the words "with Him"—God will bring departed believers with Him when He returns. They are with Him now. This is exactly what Scripture teaches.

"And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, <u>To day</u> shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Lk.23:43).

The point is this: departed believers are already with the Lord, living face to face with Him. We do not have to wonder where they are. When they died, they went immediately to be with the Lord in paradise or heaven, and they shall never be separated from the Lord. Therefore, when He returns to earth, He will bring all

departed believers with Him.

b. Note the words "sleep in Jesus"—it is those who sleep in Jesus that God will bring with Him when He returns to earth. The word sleep is not teaching that death is a semi-conscious state, an existence somewhat like a deep sleep. As has already been shown, the believer immediately goes to be with Christ when he departs from this world. Sleep is simply a soft word used by believers to describe their departure from this world. It is a picture of resting from the trials and sufferings of this world. The person who believes in Jesus Christ while on this earth simply "sleeps [rests] with Jesus" throughout eternity. It is these persons—all the believers who sleep or rest in Jesus—whom God will bring with Him when He returns to earth.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death" (Jn.8:51).

c. Jesus Christ is identified as God. It is God—God in the person of Jesus Christ—who will return to earth and bring departed believers with Him. Christ has the power of God because He is God. As God, Jesus Christ...

had the power to come to earth as a man.

• had the power to die and arise from the dead.

• had the power to ascend back into heaven.

• has the power to transfer a departed believer into heaven with Him.

has the power to return to earth.

• has the power to bring all departed believers back to earth with Him.

- 2. Proof two: the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ proves that departed believers will return to earth with God. Jesus Christ came to earth to die and bear the punishment of sin for man and to arise from the dead. Therefore, if we believe in Jesus Christ...
 - we never have to die because He has already died for us.

• we shall arise from the dead even as He arose.

How? By believing that Jesus Christ died and arose from the dead for us. If we believe in Jesus Christ, then when we depart this world, we go to be with him; and when He returns, we shall return with Him.

The point is striking: the fact that Jesus Christ died and arose is the proof that departed believers are living with Him and will return with Him when He comes back to earth. Our hope—the glorious hope of the believer—is based upon the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. There is no greater basis in all the world, for Jesus Christ really did die and arise from the dead. There is no question about it, not for the genuine believer, for God has given us the witness of His Spirit. Therefore, after we have departed from this earth, we will return with Christ when He comes back to earth.

"And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day" (Jn.6:40).

3. Proof three: the Word of the Lord proves that departed believers will return to earth with God. Their bodies will actually be raised from the dead before we are caught up. This is a strong point. Paul emphatically states that this revelation has come from the Lord. Therefore,

believers should want no greater assurance. What is the revelation? We who are alive when the Lord returns shall not be caught up first. The bodies of all departed believers will be resurrected first. Again, how do we know this? How do we know that this is a fact, a real event that will actually take place? By the Word of the Lord. The Lord Jesus Christ, God Himself, declared it.

"For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe" (1 Th.2:13).

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness"

(2 Tim.3:16).

OUESTIONS:

1. What evidence is there to believe that departed believers will return with Christ?

2. What makes the doctrine of the resurrection such an important tool in witnessing? Do you feel comfortable in your ability to share this information with an unbeliever? How can you learn to do a more effective job?

3. Do you fully believe everything that you read in the Bible? Why or why not? If you do believe, can there be any question about departed believers being with

Christ?

3. THE EVENTS OF THE LORD'S RETURN (v.16-18).

The events of the Lord's return and of the resurrection are clearly spelled out in these verses.

1. First, the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven. The very first event will be the appearance of the Lord God Himself. The supreme Majesty of the universe, the Lord Jesus Christ, will rent [tear] the skies and miraculously appear in all the spectacular glory, pomp, and power of heaven itself. When He appears, three spectacular events will occur.

a. The Lord God Himself will appear "with a shout." The word means a military command. The commander-in-chief of the universe will shout louder than any

voice has ever shouted—shout even as He did when He was upon earth:

"[Believers] come forth" (Jn.11:43).

ILLUSTRATION:

What will He say when He shouts? Missionary Gregory Fisher writes:

"The question took me by surprise. I had already found that West African Bible College Students can ask some of the most penetrating questions about minute details of Scripture.

"'Reverend, 1 Thessalonians 4:16 says that Christ will descend from heaven with a loud command. I would like to know what that command will

ho?

"I wanted to leave that question unanswered, to tell him that we must not go past what Scripture has revealed, but my mind wandered to an encounter I

had earlier in the day with a refugee from the Liberian civil war.

"The man, a high school principal, told me how he was apprehended by a two-man death squad. After several hours of terror, as the men described how they would torture and kill him, he narrowly escaped. After hiding in the bush for two days, he was able to find his family and escape to a neighboring country. The escape cost him dearly: two of his children lost their lives. The stark

cruelty unleashed on an unsuspecting, undeserving population had touched me

deeply.

"I also saw flashbacks of the beggars that I pass each morning on my way to the office. Every day I see how poverty destroys dignity, robs men of the best of what it means to be human, and sometimes substitutes the worst of what it means to be an animal. I am haunted by the vacant eyes of people who have lost all hope.

"'Reverend, you have not given me an answer. What will He say?'

"The question hadn't gone away. 'Enough,' I said 'He will shout, Enough!' when He returns.

"A look of surprise opened the face of the student. 'What do you mean,

'enough'?'

"Enough suffering. Enough starvation. Enough terror. Enough death. Enough indignity. Enough lives trapped in hopelessness. Enough sickness and disease. Enough time. Enough!'"3

b. The voice of the archangel will cry out. What will He cry? His shout will probably be the rallying cry for all the armies of the heavenly angels to join in the praise of the glorious event. Christ taught that the heavenly angels would be with Him when He returned to earth (Mt.24:31; 25:31; 2 Th.1:7).

c. The trump of God shall sound. The trumpet has always been for the purpose of arousing attention and warning. The whole universe—both earth and heaven, believers, unbelievers, and angels—will be aroused; and all unbelievers will be warned. The Lord God Himself is now appearing and the events of the end time

are now being launched upon earth.

2. Second, the dead in Christ shall rise first. Why will dead believers be the first to be caught up to meet the Lord? Because of the Lord's great love and care. The first expression of love and care will be shown to those dear saints who had passed through the shadow of death. It is the very nature of Christ to show tenderness and love to those who suffer the most; therefore, they who have suffered the awful fate of death shall be the first to meet the Lord in the air. Now, note several facts.

. Only departed believers will arise; no unbeliever will be resurrected, not at this point. Only those who are "dead in Christ"—who died believing in Jesus Christ—

will be resurrected when the Lord rents the skies.

b. It will be the bodies of the departed believers that are resurrected. The believers themselves, that is, their spirits, are already with the Lord. Their bodies are being raised and transformed to live forever with God. The shout of the Lord to "come forth" will call together all the atoms of a person's body, no matter where the various parts of a person's body may lie. The atoms of a person's body will be transformed to structure an eternal and perfect body.

. The bodies of the departed believers will arise first—arise before we who are alive

are caught up.

3. Third, we who are alive will be caught up right after the dead have risen. There will be a glorious transformation of our bodies just as there will be of those whose bodies have decayed in the earth. The change will be as Scripture declares: the infusion of a totally new nature.

"For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (1 Cor.15:53).

a. The nature of the believer's present body is corruptible and mortal; the nature of his new body will be incorruptible and immortal.

⇒ The "corruptible" and "mortal" nature means that men are earthly; that they age, deteriorate, die, decay, and decompose. Every person, no matter

who he is, is earthly and will return to the earth unless Jesus returns while

the person is living on the earth.

The "incorruptible" and "immortal" nature means that believers will be made heavenly, that they will be transformed and given a perfect nature that will never age, deteriorate, die, decay, or decompose. They will be completely free from defilement and depravity. They will be given a body that is perfect, a body that is diametrically opposed to their present body, a body that is perfected forever to live with God in the new heavens and earth.

b. Note the word "must" in 1 Cor.15:54. It shows the absolute necessity for the change of man's body. If man is to live with God, his body must be changed. It is essential, a must, an absolute necessity if man is to live forever.

"Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection" (Lk.20:36).

- 4. Fourth, the great union of the living with the dead will take place. Note the emphatic declaration: we "shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord." We will be reunited with all our loved ones who are believers, and even more wonderful, all believers—our loved ones and those whom we have never known—will all be united together with our wonderful Lord. We will all be there together rejoicing in the presence of Him who has saved us and transformed us into perfect and eternal beings. What a reunion! What a day of rejoicing that will be!
- 5. The experience of living face to face with the Lord begins. We shall be caught up and "so shall we ever be with the Lord." As wonderful as the reunion of believers will be, the most wonderful event will be seeing our Lord face to face for the very first time. What will our first thoughts be? Our first reaction? Everything will take place in the blinking of an eye. Suddenly...

• we will be standing in mid-air and transformed into perfect men and women.

• we will be standing in the clouds in the midst of teeming millions.

 we will be transformed in the midst of the spectacular glory and majesty, dominion and power of the Lord God Himself.

Is there any question what our first thoughts and response will be? The great reunion with family and believers will not be the occupation of our thoughts. Christ will be! The Lord God Himself in all His majestic glory and sovereignty will consume our attention and praise. We will be lifting up His name in the most perfect hymn of praise and adoration ever arranged. Jesus

Christ Himself will be the total focus of our attention.

6. The present exhortation: comfort one another with these words. God does not reveal the events of the end time to satisfy curiosity. He tells us about the glorious events so that we can prepare and comfort one another. There is no need for discouragement on this earth; no need for extreme sorrow and grief; no need for hopelessness; and no need for ignorance. The Lord Himself has given us the most wonderful hope—the hope of living forever face to face with Him—of worshipping and serving Him forever in a new heavens and earth.

"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Cor.5:1).

OUESTIONS:

1. Who will be the first to arise with Christ? Why is this so? How does this comfort

those who are still living?

2. As you read these verses, how does it affect your attitude about how to live, who to trust, where to serve, etc.?

3. If Christ came for you today, would you be ready? What can you do to better prepare for this day? To help others to prepare?

4. THE DAY OF THE LORD'S RETURN AND OF THE DAY OF THE LORD (ch.5:1-3)

Paul wants to make it perfectly clear that he does not know when the Lord is returning to

earth nor does anyone else. Note five points.

1. When is the Lord returning? This is a fact that should not have to be discussed. Paul had already taught the believers that no one knows when the Lord is returning to earth; only God knows. Therefore, there is absolutely no need to discuss "the times and the seasons." This is strong, but a strong statement is needed with those who set dates. Note the meaning of "times" and "seasons."

⇒ "Times" means chronological time, the events that follow one another and roll in and away from one another. Paul had already covered the times, the order of

events that were to happen in the end time.

⇒ "Seasons" means the particular time and the nature of the events that are to take place. Paul had already covered the critical events and discussed what would be happening in the events.

APPLICATION 1:

Note a crucial point: times and seasons are periods of time that cover many years for men—years that can extend into decades and centuries. This is exactly what Paul is saying: "the times" of the end time extend over a long chronological time; but "the seasons," the very nature and happening of critical periods, can be looked at and observed. When dealing with end time events, we must always keep this fact in mind.

APPLICATION 2:

Once a believer has studied the times and seasons of the end time, that is, the great spectacular periods of coming events and the particular happenings of the events, he knows that only God could know when He is returning. There are just too many intricate details, ramifications, and weaving of events in the happenings of history for any man to know when the fulness of time is to arrive. Only God could know when the intricate details of events have been fulfilled. Only God could know when He is to return.

2. When is the Lord returning? When "the day of the Lord" is ready to come upon the earth. This is exactly what Paul is saying. And when is "the day of the Lord"? No man knows. It is coming as a thief in the night—suddenly and unexpectedly. Believers are to be looking for the Lord's return, but unbelievers will be caught completely off guard. To say that unbelievers will be surprised is an understatement. They will be shocked and stand in stark terror at the appearance of Christ and at the judgments that will begin to fall upon earth.

⇒ Note: "the day of the Lord" refers to the Lord's dealings with unbelievers. John Wal-

voord puts it in simple and striking words:

"The Day of the Lord is a period of time in which God will deal with wicked men directly and dramatically in fearful judgment. Today a man may be a blasphemer of God, an atheist, can denounce God and teach bad doctrine. Seemingly God does nothing about it. But the day designated in Scripture as 'the day of the Lord' is coming when God will punish human sin, and He will deal in wrath and in judgment with a Christrejecting world. One thing we are sure of, that God in His own way will bring every soul into judgment."

That day, the day when God will bring every soul into judgment, is what the Bible calls "the day of the Lord." When is Christ returning? When the earth has reached such a depraved condition that it is hopelessly lost forever and ripe for the judgments of "the day of the Lord."

"Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage" (Jude 14-16).

3. The day of the Lord will come when the world of unbelievers feel a great sense of security—when they are saying "peace and safety." Some leaders throughout the world or some world organization will cooperate and be able to achieve some semblance of peace and security throughout the world. People will be revelling in the security and living it up even as they did in the days of Noah.

"And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed" (Lk.17:26-30).

4. The day of the Lord will be a day of catastrophic destruction. When the world is crying out for peace and safety, a terrible destruction will be lying right over the horizon. Suddenly, out of nowhere, the great and terrible day of the Lord will fall upon the world and the unbelievers of the world. Note the term "sudden destruction": it will be totally unexpected. It will be just like the travail that suddenly strikes a woman who is with child. The pain, suffering, and destruction will be relentless.

"Howl ye; for the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt: and they shall be afraid: pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth: they shall be amazed one at another; their faces shall be as flames" (Is.13:6-8).

5. The day of the Lord will be a day of no escape. "They shall not escape." This is a double negative in the Greek: they shall not, by no means, escape. Judgment and destruction are an absolute surety; they shall not, in no wise, escape. All human beings who have not truly rusted Jesus Christ will face the terrible day of the lord.

"Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" (Mt.23:33).

OUESTIONS:

1. When is the Lord returning? Who knows when Christ is returning?

2. Describe in a few words the world's reaction during the Day of the Lord. How could you share these thoughts with an unbeliever in order to witness to him?

3. If you were an unbeliever and heard this description about the "day of the Lord," would you think twice about how you were living?

4. Why will a loving God judge the world?

5. As a believer, what must you do while you are still on this earth?

SUMMARY:

Christ is coming back again--but none of us knows when. Will you be ready? Are you doing all you can to help others prepare for that inevitable day? Keep these points in mind as you await that promised day:

1. The concern: Will believers be resurrected when Christ returns?.

2. The fact: Departed believers will return with Christ.

3. The events of the Lord's return.

4. The time of the Lord's return and of the Day of the Lord.

PERSONAL JOURNAL NOTES: (Reflection & Response)

2. T	he area	that I	need	to	work	on	the	most	is
------	---------	--------	------	----	------	----	-----	------	----

3. I can apply this lesson to my life by:

4. Closing Statement of Commitment:

William Barclay. The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians, p.235f. Elon Foster, Editor. 6,000 Classic Sermon Illustrations, p.670.

Craig B. Larson, Editor. Illustrations for Preaching & Teaching, p.210-211.

e

b. To edify others

	B. The Lord's Re-	are drunken in the	him with the night
	turn & the Be-	night.	& evil behavior
	liever's Behavior,	8 But let us, who are	3. The believer is to be
	5:4-11	of the day, be sober,	sober & to protect
_		putting on the breast-	
1. The believer is not to	4 But ye, brethren, are	plate of faith and love;	a. How: By putting or
be overtaken by the	not in darkness, that	and for an helmet, the	
Lord's return	that day should over-	hope of salvation.	faith, love, & hope
a. Because he is not	take you as a thief.	9 For God hath not	b. The reasons
in darkness	5 Ye are all the chil-	appointed us to wrath,	1) He is not ap-
b. Because he is a	dren of light, and the	but to obtain salvation	pointed to wrath
child of light	children of the day:	by our Lord Jesus	but to salvation
c. Because he is a	we are not of the		
child of the day		10 Who died for us,	
2. The believer is not to		that, whether we wake	
be spiritually asleep		or sleep, we should	
nor unwatchful	let us watch and be	live together with him.	
	sober.	11 Wherefore comfort	
a. Fact: Some do		yourselves together,	
sleep	sleep in the night; and	and edify one another,	a. To encourage other

Section III THE COMING AGAIN OF JESUS CHRIST 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:28

they that be drunken even as also ye do.

THE LORD'S RETURN AND THE BELIEVER'S BEHAVIOR

Text: 1 Thessalonians 5:4-11

To be fully prepared for the return of Christ: Prepared mentally and physically.

Memory Verse:

Study 2:

Aim:

b. Reason: Identifies

"Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober" (1 Thessalonians 5:6).

INTRODUCTION:

There is a particular circus which advertises itself as the greatest show on earth. Amazing feats of skill and daring are featured in this three-ring circus. At the end of this breath-taking show, the crowd leaves shaking their heads over all that they have witnessed. Great as the performance is, the Christian believer knows that an even greater show is on the way.

The return of Jesus Christ is to be the most phenomenal event in all of human history. It will be the most amazing and spectacular event ever to be witnessed by the eyes of man. Its importance cannot be overstressed, for when Christ returns, both the blessing and the judgment of God will fall upon the earth. Genuine believers will be blessed and unbelievers will suffer the wrath of God. Because of this, how a believer behaves while he is on earth matters greatly to God. This passage deals with the all important subject of the Lord's return and the believer's behavior.

OUTLINE:

- 1. The believer is not to be overtaken by the Lord's return (v.4-5).
- 2. The believer is not to be spiritually asleep nor unwatchful (v.6-7).
- 3. The believer is to be sober and to protect himself (v.8-10).
- 4. The believer is to minister (v.11).

1. THE BELIEVER IS NOT TO BE OVERTAKEN BY THE LORD'S RETURN (v.4-5).

The believer is not in darkness; therefore, 'that day' should not surprise him. 'That day' refers back to the Day of the Lord—that great and terrible day of God's wrath, the awful judgment of God which is to fall upon the earth and unbelievers. Note the word "overtake." It means to come upon or take hold of by surprise. The day of the Lord is not to take the believer by surprise, not to come upon him like a thief, unexpectedly. There are three strong reasons why the believer is not to be caught off guard by the Day of the Lord.

The believer is not in darkness.

a. The believer is not in the darkness of ignorance. He knows that the terrible day of God's judgment is coming. He has studied and been taught the Word of God. Both the preachers and teachers of God's Word have been faithful in warning the world: the Day of the Lord is coming upon the world. All must give an account of their rebellion against God and their selfish hoarding against the desperate people of the world. No true believer is ignorant of the truth; no true believer dwells in the darkness of ignorance. If he is a true believer, he knows that God's judgment is to fall upon men; he knows that the Day of the Lord is coming. Therefore, he is to be an-

ticipating it. He is not to be caught by surprise when it comes.

b. The believer is not in the darkness of sin. He does not roam around in the world living in sin. His mind and thoughts are not consumed with the things of this world. He is not blinded by the glitter and power of possessions nor by the passions and pleasures of the flesh. The believer does not walk throughout the day with his thoughts glued to this earth, seldom if ever thinking about God. He is not in the darkness of sin, feeling that God is way off in outer space someplace and unconcerned with what happens on this earth. The believer is not separated from God and ignorant about God and His ways. His life is focused on God, and his thoughts are godly. He knows God personally and intimately. Therefore, he knows that God is holy and just as well as loving. He knows that God must judge the unbelievers of the world.

2. The believer is a child of light (Greek, son). This simply means that the believer is a child of God, for God is light (1 Jn.1:5). The believer possesses the very nature of God, which is light. He knows God; therefore, he is not to be caught off guard nor surprised when the Lord comes to

iudge the world.

3. The believer is a child of the day. This is a wonderful truth. It means that the believer will escape the judgment of God. He is a child who is accepted by God; therefore, he will be accepted in that day of the Lord's return. He will not have to face the terrible day of the Lord and suffer the judgment of God's wrath. He is a child of the day, of God's glorious salvation and deliverance. Therefore, the believer should be looking for the Lord's return and the day of the Lord's wrath. He should not be walking in darkness with his mind and thoughts upon the world. He should be walking about praying and thinking about the things of God and the utter necessity to reach people for Christfor the great and terrible day of the Lord is coming. It is right over the horizon, ever so near.

"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid" (Mt.5:14).

"So let all thine enemies perish, O LORD: but let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might" (Judg.5:31).

OUESTIONS:

1. Do believers need to fear the 'day of the Lord'? Why or why not? How do these verses help you to understand the 'day of the Lord'?

2. Do you need to make changes in your life to ensure that you are a child of the light

and not a child of darkness?

3. Do you think it is possible to have an effective witness if you do not really live for the Lord? Why or why not?

4. What precautions can you take so that you will not be caught off guard by the Day of the Lord?

2. HE IS NOT TO BE SPIRITUALLY ASLEEP OR UNWATCHFUL (v.6-7).

Sleep refers to spiritual sleep. When a person is asleep, he is not alert nor involved in what is going on around him. When a believer is spiritually asleep, he is not alert nor involved in the things of God. His mind and behavior are not concerned with the things of God. He slumbers, dozes, and sleeps. A person who is spiritually asleep is not alert nor aware of what God is doing. Therefore, he will be caught off guard when the Lord returns.

But note: the believer is not to sleep. He is to watch and be sober.

⇒ To watch means to be alert and on guard to live for Christ. Remember: Christ may rent the skies at any moment and return to earth; therefore, we must be watching every moment of every day.

⇒ To be sober means to be rigid in discipline and control for Christ; to live a strict life

of righteousness and godliness, ever looking for the return of the Lord.

Note two tragic facts about some believers—facts that should never happen to genuine follows of Christ.

1. Some do sleep. The word "others" refers to the unbelievers of the world (1 Th.4:13). But note: this exhortation is being given to believers. Therefore, some believers have a desperate need to heed this warning. They have fallen asleep spiritually. They are...

no longer alert to the things of God.

no longer alive to God, thinking and keeping their thoughts upon God.

• no longer worshipping God, praying and fellowshipping with God and His people.

no longer anticipating the return of Christ.

no longer active for God, serving and working for God.

Tragically, they are asleep. They are not watching nor living sober lives. Discipline and control

in righteousness and godliness are the furthest things from their minds.

2. Some are identified with the night and with evil behavior. This is exactly what Scripture is saying. The person who sleeps sleeps in the night, and the person who gets drunk gets drunk in the night. Nighttime is usually the time when people sleep and become involved in sin. Therefore, if a believer carouses around with those who are of the night, he is identifying himself with the sinners of the world.

⇒ If a believer carouses around with the sleepers of the world—those who are asleep to the things of God—then he is identified with the sleeping unbelievers of the world.

⇒ If a believer carouses around with the drunken of the world—those who are indulgent, lustful, worldly, and fleshly—then he is identified with the drunken unbelievers of the world.

This is a good way to identify a believer or an unbeliever: if he carouses around in the darkness of the night, then he shows himself to be of the night. If he walks around in the day, then he shows himself to be of the day.

"Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh" (Mt.25:13).

ILLUSTRATION:

Do you stay focused on the things of the Lord? Many have settled into a profession of Christ that has one eye open and the other eye closed. For the sake of Christ, we must stay sober and ready for His coming.

"Lord Shackleton once went to search for the South Pole. He had to turn back, leaving some of his men on Elephant Island amid the ice and snow. He promised to come back for them. He finally reached South Georgia, where he secured another ship and supplies; and then went back to get his men.

"He tried to reach Elephant Island, but failed time after time. Suddenly one day there appeared an open place through the ice leading to the island! Quickly he ran his men through the open place, got his men on board the ship, and came out again, just before the ice crashed together. It was done in half an hour.

"When the excitement was partly over, he asked one of the men who had been on the island, 'How did it happen that you were all packed and ready for my com-

ing? You were standing on the shore ready to leave at a moment's notice.

"The man replied, 'Sir, you said that you would come back for us, and we never gave up hope. Whenever the sea was partly clear of ice, we rolled up our sleeping bags and packed our things, saying, 'Maybe Shackleton will come today.' We were always ready for your coming.'"

Jesus could come back at any time. Are you ready to go at a moment's notice?

OUESTIONS:

1. Do you really believe Christ could come at any time? Why or why not?

2. Are you in tune with what God is doing in the world around you? In your church?

In you?

3. Are you constantly on guard for Christ's return, trying to walk in a way that is pleasing to the Lord, or do you find yourself being pulled into the darkness? How can you keep this from happening?

4. What insights can you draw from these verses as they apply to your witness?

3. HE IS TO BE SOBER AND TO PROTECT HIMSELF (v.8-10).

The believer is to be sober; that is, he must be mentally awake, alert, and watchful; and he must protect himself. He must make sure that he stays spiritually sober and well protected.

1. How can the believer stay sober and protect himself? By putting on the armour of God.

What is the armour of God?

- a. There is the breastplate of faith and love. The breastplate protected the heart of the soldier. The heart of the believer must be protected. His heart must be committed and focused upon Jesus Christ and His cause for world conquest. It is the breastplate of faith and love that will protect our hearts and keep them focused upon Christ and His cause.
 - ⇒ Faith protects our hearts: when we really believe that Jesus Christ saves us from sin and death and delivers us from the judgment of God, then we focus our lives upon Jesus Christ. We stay sober: we live righteously and godly in this present world and look for the glorious appearing of the great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. Our faith in Christ keeps us sober.

"Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked" (Eph.6:16).

⇒ Love protects our hearts: when we really see the love of Christ for us—that He actually bore our sins and punishment on the cross—then we break before Him and bow in humble adoration and love. Love floods us, for He did so much for us. We never have to die; we never have to bear the punishment of sin—all because He loved us. Therefore, our hearts reach out to Him broken and pouring love back to Him. We stay sober: we live righteously and godly and look for His return because we love Him. Our love keeps us sober.

"For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again" (2 Cor.5:14-15).

b. There is the helmet of the Christian soldier, the hope of salvation. There is only one way we can be prepared for the return of Christ and escape the judgment of God: we must keep our minds and lives focused upon Christ. How can we do this? By protecting our minds with the helmet of God's armour, the hope of salvation. We are to focus our minds upon the hope of salvation. We are to eat, drink, and sleep salvation—the great hope God has given. If we focus our lives upon salvation—if we live and move and have our being in the great hope God has given of living forever with Him—then we will stay sober. We will live a righteous life for Christ, and we will be eagerly waiting for the return of Christ. Our hope of salvation keeps us sober.

"For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?" (Ro.8:24).

2. Why is the believer to stay sober and protect himself? There are two significant reasons.

a. God has not appointed us to wrath, but to salvation. The only way to escape the wrath of God is to stay sober and focused upon Jesus Christ. When God saved us, he appointed us to receive salvation from sin, death, and judgment to come. He did not appoint us to death and wrath. Therefore, there is no excuse for a believer to fall asleep and return to the world of darkness. A person who is not sober will suffer the wrath of God.

"For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (Jn.3:17-19).

b. Christ died for us. Note the words wake or sleep: they mean alive or departed. When Christ returns, whether we are still alive on the earth or departed, we shall live together with Him forever and ever. This is why He died, the very reason He went to the cross: that we might have the glorious privilege of living together with Him throughout all eternity.

"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" (1 Pt.3:18).

OUESTIONS:

1. In what practical ways can you stay sober and protect yourself in this evil and corrupt world?

2. For what reasons should you stay sober and protect yourself?

3. What is your motivation for staying sober and protecting yourself? Will believers who do not keep their minds on Christ suffer God's wrath? Why or why not?

4. HE IS TO MINISTER (v.11).

The believer is to minister by comforting and edifying others. God has delivered us from the wrath to come and given us the glorious hope of living face to face with Him forever. Therefore, we are not to sleep, but we are to be sober, awake, alert, and watchful for that glorious day.

⇒ We are to "comfort" each other: exhort, encourage, and admonish each other.

"Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do" (1 Th.5:11).

⇒ We are to "edify" each other: strengthen and build each other up.

"Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another" (Ro.14:19).

ILLUSTRATION:

Every true believer is going to heaven. Until Christ calls us home, we have plenty of work to do in this world. A great part of that work is to comfort and encourage one another.

"In the fall of the year, Linda, a young woman, was traveling alone up the rutted and rugged highway from Alberta to the Yukon. Linda didn't know you don't travel to Whitehorse alone in a rundown Honda Civic, so she set off where only four-wheel-drives normally venture. The first evening she found a room in the mountains near a summit and asked for a 5 A.M. wakeup call so she could get an early start. She couldn't understand why the clerk looked surprised at that request, but as she awoke to early-morning fog shrouding the mountain tops, she understood.

"Not wanting to look foolish, she got up and went to breakfast. Two truckers invited Linda to join them, and since the place was so small, she felt obliged. 'Where are you

headed?' one of the truckers asked.

"'Whitehorse.'

"'In that little Civic? No way! This pass is dangerous in weather like this.'

"'Well, I'm determined to try,' was Linda's gutsy, if not very informed, response.

"'Then I guess we're just going to have to hug you,' the trucker suggested."

"Linda drew back. 'There's no way I'm going to let you touch me!

"'Not like that!' The truckers chuckled. 'We'll put one truck in front of you and one in the rear. In that way, we'll get you through the mountains.' All that foggy morning Linda followed the two red dots in front of her and had the reassurance of a big escort behind as they made their way safely through the mountains.

"Caught in the fog in our dangerous passage through life, we need to be 'hugged.' With fellow Christians who know the way and can lead safely ahead of us, and with oth-

ers behind, gently encouraging us along, we, too, can pass safely."

QUESTIONS:

1. Who do you need to encourage on a regular basis? What kinds of things can you do for them?

2. Who encourages you the most? What kinds of things do they do for you?

3. What would happen to your church if every member were being comforted and encouraged? What would God have you do in order to make this a reality in your church?

SUMMARY:

You are to be daily preparing yourself for the greatest event on earth—the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. As you wait:

- . You must not to be overtaken by the Lord's return.
- 2. You must not to be spiritually asleep nor unwatchful.

1. The most important thing that I learned from this lesson was:

- 3. You must be sober and protect yourself.
- 4. You must minister.

PERSONAL JOURNAL NOTES: (Reflection & Response)

2. The area that I need to work on the most is:

3. I can apply this lesson to my life by:

4. Closing Statement of Commitment:

Gospel Herald. Walter B. Knight. 3,000 Illustrations for Christian Service, p.605. Craig B. Larson, Editor. Illustrations for Preaching & Teaching, p.87.

	C. The Lord's Re-	thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ	
	in the Church,	Jesus concerning you.	1 75
	5:12-28	19 Quench not the	A A
		Spirit.	Spirit
1. Behavior toward the		20 Despise not pro-	
leaders of the church		phesyings.	prophesying
a. Know them		21 Prove all things;	f. Test all things:
	among you, and are	hold fast that which is	Hold fast to what is
	over you in the Lord,	good.	good
	and admonish you;	22 Abstain from all	g. Abstain from all
b. Esteem them very	13 And to esteem them	appearance of evil.	appearance of evil
highly in love	very highly in love for	23 And the very God	4. The results of proper
c. Be at peace among		of peace sanctify you	
yourselves		wholly; and I pray	
,		God your whole spirit	
2. Behavior toward the	14 Now we exhort you.	and soul and body be	spirit, soul, & body
church family	brethren, warn them	preserved blameless	
a. Warn the unruly		unto the coming of	
b. Comfort the faint	fort the feeblemind-		
hearted		24 Faithful is he that	c. Assurance of God's
c. Support the weak		calleth you, who also	faithfulness
d. Be patient toward all	men.	will do it	101111111111111111111111111111111111111
e. See that no one		25 Brethren, pray for	5. The final exharts-
renders evil for evil			tions for behavior
to any man		26 Greet all the breth-	a. Pray for the minis-
3. Behavior toward	follow that which is		ters
God—personal be-		27 I charge you by the	b. Greet all Christians
havior		Lord that this epistle	c. Read this epistle to
101	all men.	be read unto all the	all Christians—
a. Rejoice always	16 Rejoice evermore.		study the Word of
b. Pray always		28 The grace of our	
Truj urungo		Lord Jesus Christ be	
c. Give thanks in all	18 In every thing give		Lord rest upon you
o, care mana m an	To movery uning give	Widi you. Zimon.	Lord rest upon you

Section III THE COMING AGAIN OF JESUS CHRIST 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:28

(Note: Because of the length of this outline and commentary, you may wish to split this passage into two or three studies.)

Study 3: THE LORD'S RETURN AND BEHAVIOR IN THE CHURCH

Text: 1 Thessalonians 5:12-28

Aim: To be fully prepared for the return of Christ, prepared in every area of church life.

Memory Verse:

"In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

INTRODUCTION:

If Jesus were to return this week, would He find you in a place where you would not want to be found? One time a certain man decided to go to a movie that was showing at the local theater. This movie was the talk of Hollywood, a recipient of several awards. As he sat in the theater, he justified his attendance because he liked one of the actors. Settling into his seat, he

began to fidget and became disturbed by what he was seeing on the silver screen.

He had to make a decision: To go or to stay. To go would mean becoming the laughingstock of his friends. He would also have wasted his money. But to stay would mean quenching the Holy Spirit. As he struggled to make his decision, this thought invaded his mind, "If Jesus came back today, would He want to find me here?" Enough said. He got up out of his seat and never went back to that kind of movie.

On another occasion, he began watching a certain type of TV program and ended up being

confronted with the same decision:

⇒ Should he switch channels? ⇒ Should he turn the TV off?

⇒ Should he continue watching and grieve God's Holy Spirit?

The behavior of man needs to be changed. There is one thing that will change it as much as anything else: seeing and grasping the Lord's return to earth. If a person really believes that Jesus Christ is returning to earth, it will radically change his life.

OUTLINE:

Behavior toward the leaders of the church (v.12-13). 1.

Behavior toward the church family (v.14-15).

Behavior toward God—personal behavior (v.15-22).

The results of proper behavior (v.23-24).

The final exhortations for behavior (v.25-28).

1. BEHAVIOR TOWARD THE LEADERS OF THE CHURCH (v.12-13).

Note the word "labor." It means to labor to the point of exhaustion, then to keep on laboring; to continue laboring even if one has become weary; to arduously labor; to toil to the point of weariness; to work beyond what one is capable of doing. The point is forceful, and it should convict the heart of God's servant:

⇒ The minister of God is to arduously labor for his Lord. ⇒ The minister of God is to toil and toil for the church.

⇒ The minister is to labor to the point of exhaustion in ministering to people.

This is the work of the ministry; this is the demand made upon the minister's time and energy. His whole mind, body, and soul belong to the Lord and are to be poured out into the lives of God's dear people, into both the believers and the unbelievers of the world.

Now, note the three exhortations of these two verses.

Believers are to know the leaders of their church. The word "know" means to acknowledge, appreciate, respect, and know the value of. Few people labor as much as a committed church leader.

a. Take, for example, the committed minister. Compare his work with any other professional. How much time would some other professional take away from his regular duties...

if he had to speak for thirty or more minutes at a conference this week? if he had to speak two or three times at the conference to the same people?

if he had to speak every week-two or three times-to the same people; that is, he could never use the same speech.

 if he had to attend several committee meetings at the conference every week?

if he had to visit everyone at the conference when they went into the hospi-

tal?

if he had to visit all the family members and the close relatives of the conference members when they went into the hospital?
if he had to counsel all the conference members and their family members

when they had a serious problem?

• if he had to conduct all the funerals of the conference members and their families?

- if he had to conduct all the weddings of the daughters of the conference members?
- if he were expected to visit in the homes of most, if not all, of the conference members.
- if he were expected to visit all the newcomers and prospective members within the community of the conference.

The list could go on and on. But while the professional is doing all this, he still has to manage the administration of his business (the church itself).

b. Take, for example, the committed teacher of the Lord. The committed teacher works all day at some job either in the home or out at some secular job. Then when he or she gets home, think of the time spent...

• in studying and preparing the lesson.

in praying.

• in telephoning class members.

• in visiting class members: at home and in the hospital.

• in counseling and ministering to class members.

• in fellowshipping and growing class members one on one and in groups (at meals, study groups, and at social functions).

For the committed teacher, the hours are endless, and just think, the committed teacher does this every week.

The same could be said about any church leader who is genuinely committed to the Lord and takes his or her calling seriously. The leader's service to the church and ministry is above and beyond his work week at a secular job and his duties to civic affairs. True, he lives for Christ wherever he is—at work and at civic functions. But he commitment goes beyond that: the church leader has been called by God...

• to teach, edify, and build up the church and its believers.

- to equip himself to be a dynamic witness for the Lord and to reach out to save the lost.
- to organize and minister to the desperate needs of the poor and hurting.

The point is this: believers are to know their leaders—acknowledge, appreciate, and respect them. They deserve it.

"Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me" (Ro.15:30).

"Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering

the end of their conversation" (Heb.13:7).

2. Believers are to highly esteem their leaders. Two significant things are said here.

a. Leaders are to be highly esteemed in love: with affection, held ever so dear to a

believer's heart.

b. Leaders are to be highly esteemed for their work's sake, that is, because of the work they do. They are ministers of the Lord and they serve Christ, the church, and its believers. Believers owe much to them because of their sacrificial service. Therefore, believers are to highly esteem them.

"Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation" (Ph.2:29).

3. Believers and leaders are to be at peace among themselves. Note: this exhortation is given to the leader as well as to the believer or follower. Believers are not to criticize, murmur, grumble, envy, or oppose their leaders. Differ, yes, but not oppose—unless, of course, he is

acting contrary to Scripture or to the love of God's Spirit.

Leaders are not to act as lords over God's people, nor are they to lead for the sake of seeking position, boosting ego, securing recognition, receiving honor, or making a livelihood. A leader who leads for these reasons cannot feed the people of God. He does not have the presence and blessing of God which are necessary to feed the flock of God. Therefore, such leaders cause a restlessness and dissatisfaction among God's people.

The exhortation is for believers to be at peace among themselves. Both leaders and the people are to be totally committed to Christ, doing exactly what God has called them to do. When both

are so serving, then they are at peace with each other.

"For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints" (1 Cor.14:33).

ILLUSTRATION:

It is crucial to the life of a church that its leaders be respected. For where there is no respect, the ministry of the church implodes into a spiritual ruin. Warren Wiersbe illustrates this point very well.

"According to Martin L. Gross in his book, The <u>Psychological Society</u>, more than 60,000 guidance workers and 7,000 school psychologists work in our American public education system, and many of them function as substitute parents. Many students need counseling, but no professional worker can take the place of a loving, faithful father or mother.

"When our oldest son entered high school, he met his assigned counselor. 'Now, if you have any problems, feel free to come to me,' the counselor said. Our son replied, 'If I have any problems, I'll talk to my father!' He was not being disrespectful or unappreciative of the counselor, but he was giving expression of a basic principle: children need the leadership and guidance that only parents can give.

"God has ordained leadership for the local church. It is true that we are "all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal.3:28); but it is also true that the Head of the church has given gifts to people, then given these people to the churches to exercise His will (Eph.4:7-16). Just as the flock needs a shepherd (1 Pet.5:1-5), so the [church] family needs a leader[s]."

If the leaders in your church are not respected, the sheep will seek out other shepherds.

OUESTIONS:

1. What is your role in relation to your church leaders?

2. What kind of schedule do your church leaders keep? How can you pray for them?

 What one thing do you most appreciate about your pastor? Your teacher? Explain your answer.

. Do your church leaders know that you appreciate them? In what ways can you

communicate your appreciation for them?

5. What can you do to help your church leaders in their awesome task?

2. BEHAVIOR TOWARD THE CHURCH FAMILY (v.14-15).

A list of exhortations is given to all believers in these two verses-exhortations that tell us

how to behave toward the whole church family.

1. Warn the unruly: "those who are out of line—the loafers, the disorderly, and the unruly" (The Amplified New Testament). The word unruly is a military term that referred to the soldier who broke rank and did not stand in his place. Too many believers are not where they belong. They belong in the ranks of the Lord and of the church: fellowshipping with the Lord and fellow believers; serving the Lord and ministering to believers; helping to reach the lost and ministering to the poor and needy. But they are out in the world doing their own thing, fulfilling their own desires and lusts.

The unruly must be warned and admonished. They are treading on thin ice. They are damaging their own souls and hurting others through their unruly testimony. The Lord will not tolerate

such unruly behavior. The implication is that He will judge all unruly behavior.

"And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another" (Ro.15:14).

2. Comfort the feebleminded: the faint-hearted, timid, reserved, dispirited; those who lack courage and are cowardly; those who are easily discouraged and disappointed; those who fear difficult situations. The picture is that of a person who hesitates to serve or witness; a person who fails to live for Christ because of being faînt-hearted. We must not rebuke or despise them, but instead comfort, encourage, and assure them.

"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong" (1 Cor.16:13).

3. Support the weak: the spiritually weak; those who yield so easily to temptation; those who are so easily burdened, discouraged, defeated, and led astray. These need to be supported. The word means to cling and hold to. The weak need us clinging to them and holding them up. They need our support.

"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves" (Ro.15:1).

4. Be patient toward all persons. Leon Morris points out that being patient is the opposite of being short-tempered. It is being consistently patient, being very patient with people. We must bear and forbear; we must suffer a long, long time with persons, no matter the situation.

"For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise" (Heb.10:36).

5. Look after every believer: see that no believer renders evil for evil to any person. Note: it is understood that throughout life some people will do evil against everyone of us. This verse clearly states that we are responsible for each other and responsible for how we respond to evil.

We are to be looking after each other: see to it that none of us retaliates or mistreats those who mistreat us.

⇒ If we mistreat an unbeliever, we lose all chance of reaching him for Christ.

⇒ If we mistreat another believer, we lose all chance of reaching him and growing him in Christ.

When we mistreat a person, our testimony with that person is ruined. We lose our opportunity to minister to that person. Note the exhortation: "ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men." Always following that which is good is the only way we can ever reach and grow others, believers and unbelievers.

"Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing" (1 Pt.3:9).

OUESTIONS:

1. Are you hesitant to bring unacceptable behavior in your church to anyone's attention? Is it easier to ignore or deal with problem areas? What does God expect from you in these areas?

2. What are some practical ways you can comfort and support other believers and un-

believers?

3. Would you consider yourself to be a patient person? What can you do to become even more patient?

3. BEHAVIOR TOWARD GOD—PERSONAL BEHAVIOR (v.15-22).

Seven strong exhortations are to govern our behavior toward God.

1. Rejoice always; rejoice evermore: God has saved us, and He looks after and cares for us. If we love God, God promises that He will take all the circumstances that attack us and work them out for good (Ro.8:28). And on top of this, He has given us eternal life, the glorious privilege of living face to face with Him and serving Him forever and ever. The believer who knows and keeps his mind upon these glorious facts can do nothing but rejoice.

"Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven" (Lk.10:20).

2. Pray always—without ceasing. Prayer is God's ordained way for man to receive things from Him. God moves, acts, and responds to prayer. Prayer is a law that He has established throughout the universe. Why? Because prayer stirs fellowship and communion with God and brings about a greater knowledge and understanding of God. It causes a person to learn more and more about God and stirs more trust as well as worship and praise of God. Prayer stirs and causes every good thing imaginable between God and man. This is the reason God destined prayer as the primary way man is to communicate with Him. This is the reason for this exhortation. Therefore, pray without ceasing; continue and persevere in prayer: in your daily worship and quiet times and as you walk throughout the day.

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Mt.7:7).

3. Give thanks in all things. How can we thank God for terrible trials such as accidents and death and sin? We do not; this is not what Scripture means. What God means is to thank Him for His presence and power as we walk through such trials. In Christ Jesus there is victory

and triumph over all, no matter how terrible the circumstances. Therefore, in everything (not for everything)--as we walk through all—thank God for the victory He has given us through Christ.

Note the statement: "this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." What is the will of God? All three exhortations that have just been given:

⇒ that we rejoice evermore.⇒ that we pray without ceasing.

⇒ that we give thanks in everything.

"Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph.5:20).

Do not suppress the Spirit—do not quench the Spirit (see A Closer Look: The Holy

Spirit--1 Th.5:19 for discussion).

5. Do not despise prophesyings. Prophecy is the gift of proclaiming the gospel and of predicting the future under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Both proclamation and prediction are included in the gift. Note the exhortation: a person is not to minimize or despise the gift despite the abuse of the gift by some.

"But he that prophesieth speaketh unto me to edification, and exhortation, and comfort" (1 Cor.14:3).

6. Prove all things; hold fast to what proves to be good. The word "prove" means to test and to verify. Both the gifts and behavior of believers are to be tested. If a person claims to prophesy—whether proclaiming the gospel or predicting some event to strengthen believers for some coming trial—all should be tested. We are not to blindly accept what people say, even if it is the preacher or servant of God. Neither are we to blindly accept people themselves. Every person—what he says and does—is to be tested and proven. How? By measuring what he says and does by the Scripture. But note: the Scriptures must be studied in order to measure what people say and do. The only way to know truth from error is to know the Scripture.

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 Jn.4:1).

Now, note the exhortation: when a person or a truth is proven, hold it fast. Hold fast to all that is good. Do not let a good person go: learn from him. Do not let a good doctrine or exhortation go: hang on to it, live and practice it, and teach it to others.

"Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession" (Heb.4:14).

7. Abstain from all appearance of evil: note closely what this exhortation says. It does not just say to abstain from evil, but to abstain from the very appearance of evil.

⇒ If something even appears or borders on evil, get away from it.

⇒ If there is any chance whatsoever that it could be wrong, leave it alone.

⇒ If there is even a suggestion that it could be wrong, flee it.

A believer must have nothing, absolutely nothing, to do with evil—not even the appearance of it.

"Let love be without dissimulation [hypocrisy]. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good" (Ro.12:9).

ILLUSTRATION:

In the American Southwest lies the Grand Canyon. Those who have visited this wonder walk away with a majestic impression of its vastness. Any visitor can walk to its rim and peer down the cliffs and not be able to see the bottom. This sight-seeing is to be done with great caution because there is no rope or rail to protect the curious visitor from falling off the edge to certain death. The smart tourist will draw an imaginary line of safety and stay behind it. We, too, need to know where to draw the line, when to play it safe, and when to run. Listen to this:

Al was a restaurant manager who was handed a wallet which was lost by one of his customers. To his amazement it contained over a thousand dollars. After taking the wallet to his office, the tempter immediately came and said, "Al, no one would know if you took the money. Go ahead...hide the money in your pocket...take that trip that you've always wanted to take but couldn't afford...the owner will be glad just to get his credit cards back...he might even give you a reward!"

Al did the right thing. After finding the money, he called the owner of the wallet and told him that everything was in it. After the phone call, he placed it in a safe place until the owner could come to pick it up.

When the owner of the wallet met with Al, he couldn't thank him enough for his honesty. He had always been skeptical of Christians, but Al's witness planted a deep seed of the gospel into his heart.

Does your witness plant seeds or does it pull up tender saplings by the roots?

OUESTIONS:

1. What does the Scripture mean when it commands you to pray without ceasing? Is it possible to develop an unbroken spirit of prayer? In what way does this challenge the way you currently pray?

2. We are to give thanks in all things. What does this mean? Why is this difficult to

do sometimes?

3. We are told to abstain from all appearance of evil. How do you decide where to draw the line? Who keeps you accountable?

A CLOSER LOOK:

(5:19) Holy Spirit: suppressing the Spirit is one of the four major sins against the Holy Spirit.

1. Quenching the Spirit (1 Th.5:19). To quench means to stifle, to snuff out, to stop. The Holy Spirit is always working in the life of the believer to lead him to do God's will. The believer quenches the Spirit's work by (a) ignoring Him, (b) neglecting Him, (c) disobeying Him, or by simply (d) procrastinating. Note the context above. The command to "quench not the Spirit" is surrounded by a series of positive commands.

Grieving the Spirit (Eph. 4:30). To grieve means to pain, to vex, to sadden. The Holy

Spirit is pure, holy, and righteous. The believer grieves the Spirit when he...

• allows impure things to penetrate his life.

behaves immorally.acts unjustly.

allows or participates in anything contrary to the nature of the Spirit.

Note the context. The command to "grieve not the Spirit" is surrounded by a series of negative commands.

Blasphemy against the Spirit (see Mt.12:31; 12:33). Blasphemous words against the

Holy Spirit are unforgiven. The warning is unmistakable. Note these facts.

a. It is a tongue-sin that is unpardonable. This fact alone points to the seriousness of all tongue-sins (see Jas.3:1-12).

b. Note why Christ gave the warning. He warns...

• to strike fear in the hearts of those who border on committing the unpardonable sin (Mt.12:23-24; cp. 23:13).

to stir a reverence and repentance toward God (Mt.12:33, 37).

c. The one sin for which there is no forgiveness is not a sin against Christ, but a sin against the Holy Spirit (Mt.12:31-32). Why? There is one simple reason given in Scripture. The Holy Spirit is the Person who works in the heart of man; it is He who "convicts the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment..." (Jn.16:8-11). There is a single word that is very descriptive of His work: conviction. A man sees, feels, or hears about God's goodness and love and of his own need to surrender to God. The Spirit takes those evidences and uses them as convictions. He convicts a man's heart to believe. A man may go on and on...

insisting on his own way.

refusing to acknowledge God and surrender his life to God.

 choosing to be blind to what he sees, feels, and hears (the convictions of the Spirit).

Such a man eventually becomes so hardened that he cannot recognize God's truth and goodness. He reaches such a point of hardness that he no longer sees God or feels God or hears God. This man has blasphemed God's Spirit and counted His convictions as worthless. He has abused, reviled, neglected, ignored, and hardened his heart to the promptings of God's Spirit permanently. He has blasphemed God's Spirit and such blasphemy is unforgivable, Christ says.

d. Note what the unpardonable sin is. In the simplest and clearest of terms, it is stubborn rejection, stiff-necked refusal, obstinate unbelief. Such results in a dead spirit

and apparently a rooted malice (Mt.12:23-24).

When the Spirit convicts a man to turn to God, and that man...

• continues to reject, his rejection becomes stubborn.

continues to refuse, his refusal becomes stiff-necked.

• continues to disbelieve, his unbelief becomes obstinate.

That man deadens his spirit against the convictions of the Spirit and develops a rooted malice against God. He insists on his own way too long and refuses to sur-

render to God while his heart is still soft enough to be touched.

What a warning to creatures of conditioning and habit--a warning against conditioning ourselves to continuously reject God. And what a call to stir a reverence and repentance toward God! How much we need to surrender to God while our hearts are soft enough to be touched!

e. In trying to determine just who it is that commits the unpardonable sin, two things

are known.

⇒ The blood of Christ cleanses from every sin. There is not a single sin that cannot be forgiven--except obstinate unbelief against the convictions of the Holy Spirit (Mt.12:31-32).

⇒ There is no hope for salvation except through Christ and the convicting

power of the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, to reject or blaspheme the convicting power of the Holy Spirit is to deprive a person of salvation through Christ. Of course, a man who is concerned about having committed the unpardonable sin has not. His very concern shows that he can still come to Christ.

APPLICATION:

This is the glorious grace of God: all manner of sin (any sin, every sin, even blasphemy--even a word spoken against Christ) will be forgiven. This shows the

humiliation that both Christ and the Father are willing to bear through the denial and cursing of men. God forgives all manner of sin. There is not a single sin that God will not forgive, no matter how terrible and how often repeated. Paul, the *old* Saul of Tarsus who was a blasphemer and murderer of early believers, was forgiven by God and greatly used by God (Acts 9:1; cp. 8:1).

"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph.1:7).

4. Lying to the Holy Spirit (see Acts 5:3-4). Keeping back (or lying) is sin. Ananias and his wife, Sapphira, were professing believers, members of the early church. They professed Christ, professed...

• to deny self, all they were and had.

• to take up the cross daily.

to follow Christ.

They had some property which they did not personally need for their own necessities. They were professing to follow Christ, to take Him at His Word. Therefore, they sold their property in order to help those who were desperately needing food, shelter, clothing, and the gospel. But their profession was just that, profession only, a false profession. It was hypocritical, deceptive, a lie. They tried to fake their commitment. They tried to deceive the church. Their sin, holding back, was fivefold.

a. Keeping back is partial commitment. Ananias and Sapphira refused to give everything beyond their own necessities. They kept back *part* of the money that so many desperately needed, kept back that which was the difference between life and death for so many. They hoarded, chose to hang on to *part* of the world.

"And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Lk.12:15).

b. Keeping back is deception: it is deceiving the church. Ananias and Sapphira wanted the church to think they were *fellow believers*. They wanted the privilege and the honor, the acceptance and the fellowship of believers without paying the price of commitment and loyalty to Christ and His church. They did not want to be left out. They wanted to be included and to become part of the church fellowship. But they did not want it enough to totally commit themselves to Christ and His mission. So they tried to deceive the church. They became *pretenders* (hypocrites, liars).

"For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Ro.16:18).

c. Keeping back is allowing Satan to fill the heart instead of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not the Person who stirs sin; He is not the Person who arouses a person to hoard and keep back. The Holy Spirit stirs love--love that cares and ministers (Ro.5:5; Gal.5:22-23). The Holy Spirit is not a murderer, not the one who tempts men to keep back that which would keep others alive (whether food or safety from freezing weather, or whether life in Christ). Keeping back is of Satan; it is allowing one's heart to be filled with Satan's lies...

the lies that the challenge to give all one is and has is too much to ask (Lk.9:23).

• the lies that to lose oneself completely in the cause of Christ, to give up the world, is too unreasonable.

 the lies that what is important is to secure more and more in order to be acceptable, to have position and promotion, esteem and the comforts of the world.

the lies that one is justified in keeping back some because no one knows

the future and, after all, everyone else does it.

the lies that one can give some and keep back some and still be acceptable to God.

The thing to remember is that Satan is the "father of lies and murder" (Jn.8:44). His strategy is to get us to believe his lie that we can *keep back and hoard*. His purpose is to keep the desperate needs of the world from being met so that many persons will die prematurely, die without ever experiencing life, real life. Christ counters the lies of the devil with words spoken as simply as language can express, counters with all clarity and without equivocation or apology:

"No man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (Jn.14:6).

d. Keeping back is lying to the Holy Spirit. There are several ways this is true.

⇒ A person says that he is surrendering his life or goods to Christ, but he

does not give all.

⇒ A person says that he wants the Spirit's presence and power when he is

really unwilling to surrender all.

A person says that he is committed to walk as a brother with other believers (who are indwelt by the Spirit) when he is not willing to pay the full price of discipleship.

A person says that he wants the fulness of God's Spirit when the accep-

tance and approval of men are more important.

"But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?" (Acts 5:3).

- e. Keeping back is acting against and lying to God Himself. This, of course, is very serious.
 - 1) Keeping back mocks God. A person mocks God's Word when he says that he is giving his life to God (which means all he is and has), but he does not do it. The person who keeps back is saying that he does not have to be honest with God, that he can lie to God. Pretending always mocks God and His Word. Pretending damages the name of God and causes the world to mock and scoff God, to deny Him and His power. The pretender actually does more harm and damage to the name of Christ than the greatest sinner. How? A pretender shows and proclaims something--his life cries out to the world: "The power of God's Son is...
 - not attractive enough to draw me."

not challenging enough to captivate me."

• not important enough for me to give up everything."

not powerful enough to change me."

not loving enough to demand my loyalty."

not beneficial enough to pull me out of the world."

2) Keeping back cuts the heart of God. God loves the pretender (hypocrite, deceiver, liar). As long as the pretender's heart has enough softness to respond to the gospel, God reaches out to him. He wants the pretender, the man who keeps back, to be saved. As long as he is lost, God's heart aches, longs, hurts for the man to come home.

God's heart is also cut to the core by the suffering and death of so many who could be helped by that which the man keeps back. God feels the infirmities and weaknesses of the whole human race (Heb.2:17-18; 4:15-16). God feels so much that He gave His *only* Son to make a way for the suffering of man to be handled and erased. The very reason so many are still suffering and are so desperate in the world is that so many of us are still keeping back instead of giving all we are and have to the mission of Christ.

3) Keeping back is distrusting God.

⇒ Keeping back is not letting go of what one has beyond his necessities.

⇒ Keeping back is feeling that one has to keep back just in case.

⇒ Keeping back is being apprehensive that what one has might not be enough when it is needed.

- ⇒ Keeping back is believing that securing *mammon* (comfort, ease, pleasure, plenty, money, houses, lands, investments) is what life is all about.
- ⇒ Keeping back is trusting in *mammon* and the world for one's security.

⇒ Keeping back is thinking one can serve God (give some to Him) and mammon (keep and hoard some).

God is simply not trusted, not completely and wholly, not in the sense that He craves. His Word is not believed or taken at face value. The person who keeps back rejects the clear teaching of God's Word...

• that a man must *deny himself* completely.

"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Lk.9:23).

 that God will give all "these things"--all the necessities of life--to the man who seeks Him first.

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Mt.6:33).

OUESTIONS:

1. How can churches quench the Holy Spirit? How can you quench Him?

2. What are some ways you can guard yourself from quenching the Spirit?

 What kind of a relationship do you have with the Holy Spirit? Would you consider it to be:

Growing by leaps and bounds--a constant awareness of His presence? Stagnant at times--an occasional stirring of the conscience? Dead because of frost-bite, no warmth at all--a complete void?

Explain why you chose one of the above.

4. If there is any shortcoming with regard to the Holy Spirit and your relationship with Him, whose failure is it? Who has to make some changes and how?

. THE RESULTS OF PROPER BEHAVIOR (v.23-24).

If a believer will behave properly—if a person will follow the exhortations given in this pas-

age—he will experience four things.

1. The believer experiences the presence of the God of peace: peace means to be bound, oined, and weaved together. Only God can bind, join, and weave a person together. Only God can bring peace to a person's soul—the kind of peace that brings absolute assurance, confidence,

and security to a person's heart. And note: God possesses so much peace and is so ready to give peace that He is called the God of peace.

"And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you" (Ro.16:20).

2. The believer experiences sanctification: the word sanctification means to be set apart and separated to God. The believer who follows the exhortations of this passage is greatly blessed by God: God takes the person and sets him apart unto Himself. The person is very special to God; therefore, God gives him a special relationship with Himself. And note the word "wholly": the believer is wholly set apart to God, under God's special care, protection, and provision.

"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (Jn.17:17).

3. The believer has his spirit, soul, and body preserved blameless in the day of judgment. This is the idea of the Greek text. The word "unto" should be translated in. That is, in that day when the Lord returns, the believer will be preserved blameless. He will be acceptable to God and receive a full reward. Note the three parts of man spelled out: spirit, soul, and body. The idea is that the whole man will be preserved—his body and soul as well as his spirit. Believers are not to be some ghost-like figure or some formless spirit. They are to have their bodies and souls resurrected and preserved forever. The whole person—the whole spirit, soul, and body—will live eternally with God. But note: only if the believer follows the exhortations of the Scripture.

"That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world" (Ph.2:15).

4. The believer experiences the assurance of God, the very faithfulness of God. God called the believer; therefore, God completes His work in the believer. The work of salvation is God's work from beginning to end. If a person is not living for God, it is evidence that he is not really a true believer. But if a person is living for God by following the exhortation of Scripture, it is clear evidence that he is a true believer. He has truly been called of God. How do we know this? Because God is faithful. If God possesses a person, God continues to work in the person until the person is fully saved in the glorious day of redemption.

"But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil" (2 Th.3:3).

ILLUSTRATION:

As believer's we live in a paradox: to live, but to die; to die, but to live. This illustration helps in putting handles on a difficult task.

"The Viet Nam Veteran's Memorial is striking for its simplicity. Etched in a

black granite wall are the names of 58,156 Americans who died in that war.

"Since its opening in 1982, the stark monument has stirred deep emotions. Some visitors walk its length slowly, reverently, and without pause. Others stop before certain names, remembering their son or sweetheart or fellow soldier, wiping away tears, tracing the names with their fingers.

"For three Viet Nam veterans—Robert Bedker, Willard Craig, and Darrall Lausch—a visit to the memorial must be especially poignant, for they can walk up to the long ebony wall and find their own names carved in the stone. Because of

data-coding errors, each of them was incorrectly listed as killed in action. "Dead, but alive—a perfect description of the Christian."

Dead to self, alive to Christ. How would your name be recorded on history's wall today? Only a Christian believer experiences the peace of God, sanctification, blamelessness, and the assurance of God. Why? Because he has died to self and is alive in Christ. Are you numbered among the living in Christ?

OUESTIONS:

1. Are you failing to experience what has been promised in these verses? What do you need to do to enhance these in your life?

2. How would you describe life without the peace of God? Why do so many people

settle for less?

3. What conditions are attached to these promises? Are you meeting your part of the deal?

5. THE FINAL EXHORTATIONS FOR BEHAVIOR (v.25-28).

This is the close of the First Epistle to the Thessalonians. The final words exhort us all when

we apply them to ourselves.

1. Pray for ministers. Note that Paul does not say "please" or "if you will." He emphatically charges: "Brothers, pray for us." All believers must pray for their ministers. And note: Paul says "us" not me—all of God's chosen ministers are to be prayed for by believers. We must not omit a single minister; and the idea is that we must pray often, not just every day, but often every day. What an impact would be made upon the world if we obeyed this one charge.

"Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you" (2 Th.3:1).

2. Greet all Christian brothers, and greet them intimately with care. Just how the holy kiss took place is not really known today. But it was a common practice in the early church. It is generally thought that only men kissed men and that they kissed on the cheek, but again, the facts are not really known. The point is that affection and care are to be expressed between believers.

"Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity. Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus" (1 Pt.5:14).

3. Read this epistle to all believers. Why was it necessary for Paul to give this exhortation? Would the epistle not be read to the whole church when it gathered on Sunday? Were some believers bed-ridden or homebound? Was the church having to meet in several small groups in secret because of persecution? The answer is not known, but the lesson to us is clear. We must see to it that every believer studies this epistle as well as the rest of the Word of God. Every part of the Word is important and must be studied by all. No believer is to be left out whether bed-ridden or unable to attend services for any other reason.

APPLICATION:

What a challenge to churches! To provide ministries that will carry the Word of God out to those who are unable to worship and study at the regular service.

"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11).

4. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ rest upon you.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good

works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph.2:8-10).

OUESTIONS:

1. Who are the ministers included in your daily prayers? What can you do in order to let them know you are concerned and praying for them?

2. Do you have a difficult time showing affection for other believers? Why or why not?

3. What kind of a vision does your church have for getting the Word of God to all people? In what ways can your church's outreach be expanded?

4. What can you personally do to help your church grow?

SUMMARY:

Are you ready for the coming of the Lord? How you as a believer behave is critical--you are the example to all those who are still without Christ. They are looking closely at believers for answers in a world full of questions. They will find the answers to their questions if we sharpen our own behavior according to these main points:

- 1. Behavior toward the leaders of the church.
- 2. Behavior toward the church family.
- 3. Behavior toward God—personal behavior.
- 4. The results of proper behavior.
- 5. The final exhortations for behavior.

PERSONAL JOURNAL NOTES: (Reflection & Response)

- 1. The most important thing that I learned from this lesson was:
- 2. The area that I need to work on the most is:
- 3. I can apply this lesson to my life by:
- 4. Closing Statement of Commitment:

Warren W. Wiersbe. *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, Vol.2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1989), p.186-187.

Leon Morris. The Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians. "Tyndale New Testament Commentaries," p.101.

Craig B. Larson, Editor. Illustrations for Preaching & Teaching, p.47.

Leon Morris. The Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians. "Tyndale New Testament Commentaries," p.109.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

OUTLINE OF SECOND THESSALONIANS

THE TEACHER'S OUTLINE & STUDY BIBLE is unique. It differs from all other Study Bibles and Teaching Materials in that every Passage and Subject is outlined right beside the Scripture. When you choose any Subject below and turn to the reference, you have not only the Scripture, but you discover the Scripture and Subject already outlined for you-verse by verse.

For a quick example, choose one of the subjects below and turn over to the Scripture-you will find this to be a marvelous help for faster, easier, and more meaningful study of Scripture. In addition, every point of the Scripture and Subject is fully developed in a Commentary with these Unique Features: Personal Application, Illustrations, Questions, and much more! Again, this arrangement makes study preparation much easier and faster.

A suggestion: For the quickest overview of 2 Thessalonians, first read all the major titles (I, II, III, etc.), then come back and read the subtitles.

	OUTLINE OF 2 THESSALONIANS			
		Page		
INTRODUCTION TO 2 THESSALONIANS				
I.	GREETING: THE PICTURE OF A MODEL CHURCH UNDER ATTACK & PERSECUTION 1:1-5	123		
	A GLIMPSE INTO THE END TIME, 1:6-2:17 A. The Righteous Judgment of God, 1:6-12 B. The Day of the Lord, 2:1-3 C. The Antichrist: The Man of Sin, 2:4-9 D. The Antichrist's Followers, 2:10-12 E. The Salvation of God's Followers, 2:13-17 I. FINAL WORDS, 3:1-18 A. Prayer and The Lord's Faithfulness, 3:1-5	132 141 146 155 162		
SU	B. Work and Employment, 3:6-18 //BJECT INDEX	172		
SCRIPTURE INDEX				
IL	ILLUSTRATION INDEX			

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

INTRODUCTION

AUTHOR: Paul, the Apostle.

DATE: Uncertain. Probably A.D. 50-52, soon after First Thessalonians.

TO WHOM WRITTEN: "To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Th.1:1).

PURPOSE: Paul had two purposes for writing Second Thessalonians.

1. To assure believers that God uses persecution.

⇒ He uses persecution to refine believers. Persecution refines believers by teaching them endurance, by teaching them to stand fast in a corruptible and dying world.

⇒ He uses persecution to seal believers (2 Th.1:4-6). Persecution proves that a believer is genuine and is going to inherit future glory.

⇒ He uses persecution to seal unbelievers (2 Th.1:4-6). Persecution seals the doom of persecutors.

2. To correct some false ideas about the Lord's return.

SPECIAL FEATURES:

- 1. The City of Thessalonica. The great city was the capital and the largest city of Macedonia. (See Map--Introduction to Acts.) It had been founded by Cassander, the top military officer of Alexander the Great, after Alexander had died. Under the Romans the city had been made free because of its loyalty to Rome. As a free city it was allowed its own government and local laws, and at its height, the city reached a population of 200,000. The city had a natural narbor, but the primary factor contributing to the city's greatness was that it lay right on the Roman road, the Egnatian Way. In fact, the great road ran right through Thessalonica. It was the main street of the city, stretching all the way from the Adriatic Sea to the Middle East. Trade and commerce bristled with all the accompanying vice that follows such a metropolitan center.
- The Church of Thessalonica. It was a great day when Paul walked into the city of 2. Thessalonica bringing the news of the glorious gospel. Because of the city's strategic location and commercial importance, the gospel was bound to spread out beyond to the world rather apidly. The great city of Thessalonica was the second great European city to be evangelized. Paul had just been evangelizing in Philippi when he entered Thessalonica. Paul preached in the synagogue for only three Sabbaths before he was forced by the Jews to leave the synagogue Acts 17:2). Paul apparently moved into homes, preaching wherever he was allowed. He had so nuch success that the Jews eventually attacked and forced him to flee for his life. He took Silas and Timothy and proceeded to Berea for a brief ministry (Acts 17:10-14). But the Jews pursued nim and he was forced to leave Berea for Athens (Acts 17:13f). However, he was able to leave Silas and Timothy behind to continue the ministry. While in Athens, he sent for Timothy, but dispatched him right back to Thessalonica (1 Th.3:2f). Paul himself went on to Corinth where he vas soon joined by Silas and Timothy with good news from the Thessalonian church (Acts 8:5). His heart was so warmed by this report that he sat down and wrote the First Letter to the Thessalonians. Right after receiving the letter, the believers apparently responded to Paul, sking him some questions about the Lord's return. These questions are what stirred the Second etter to the Thessalonians.

The converts were mainly Gentiles, including a large number of devout Greeks and prestigious women. Many, especially women, were sick of the immoral society of that day. They had turned to Judaism because of its moral teachings, yet they sensed the bondage of its legalistic thrust and rejection of its national prejudices. Therefore, their hearts were ripe for the message of liberty and love preached by the gospel. The church at Thessalonica...

• was founded on Paul's second missionary journey (Acts 17:1f).

• was revisited by Paul (1 Cor.16:5).

 included some Jews and a large number of Greeks and influential women (Acts 17:4: 2 Th.3:4, 7-8).

did not support Paul. He worked at a secular job while there (1 Th.2:9); however, he did receive financial help from the church at Philippi (Ph.416).

suffered persecution (1 Th.2:14). was well organized (1 Th.5:12).

had several prominent believers known by name: Jason (Acts 176), Gaius (Acts 19:29), Aristarchus (Acts 19:29; 20:4), and Secundus (Acts 20:4).

3. Thessalonians is "An Early Epistle that Proclaims Christ to be Lord" (2 Th.1:1, 3, 6,

10; 2:15; 3:8, 11-13; 4:1-2, 13-18; 5:1-2, 9-10, 23, 28; cp. Acts 17:7).

- 4. Thessalonians is "An Epistle that Proclaims the Doctrine of the Second Coming" (2 Th.4:13f).
- 5. Thessalonians is "An Epistle of Great Encouragement for One Facing Persecution" (2 Th.1:6f; 2:2f; 2:14f; 3:3f).

6. Thessalonians is "An Epistle with a Great Evangelistic and Missionary Challenge" (2 Th.1:8-12; 2:12-13; 3:12-13; 4:1-12; 5:1f).

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

you, brethren, as it is

ceedingly

CHAPTER 1

		meet, because that	
	I. GREETING:	your faith groweth ex-	
	THE PICTURE	ceedingly, and the	5. The believers have a
	OF A MODEL	charity of every one of	love that grows &
	CHURCH UN-	you all toward each	
	DER ATTACK &	other aboundeth:	
	PERSECUTION,	4 So that we our-	6. The believers have a
	1:1-5	selves glory in you	strong endurance &
	_	in the churches of God	faith in all their tri-
1. The ministers are	Paul, and Silvanus,	for your patience and	als 1470 Agen Athrey
faithful to the chu		faith in all your perse-	
2. The believers have		cutions and tribula-	others
firm foundation in	Thessalonians in God	tions that ye endure:	
God & in Christ		5 Which is a manifest	b. Are a sign of God's
		token of the right-	coming judgment
3. The believers know			c. Are a proof that
the grace & peace			they are worthy of
God		be counted worthy of	
		the kingdom of God.	- Languom
4. The believers have		for which ye also suf-	
faith that grows ex			
	Tanana ora arrago ror	1	

Section I A GREETING: THE PICTURE OF A MODEL CHURCH UNDER ATTACK AND PERSECUTION 2 Thessalonians 1:1-5

Study 1: THE PICTURE OF A MODEL CHURCH UNDER ATTACK AND PERSECUTION

Text: 2 Thessalonians 1:1-5

To make a firm commitment to the Lord that you will work to build a strong church.

Memory Verse:

Aim:

"We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet [fit], because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth" (2 Thessalonians 1:3).

INTRODUCTION:

You have probably heard the phrase "No pain, no gain." If you want to strengthen your body, there is a certain amount of suffering that figures into the equation. In order to get into shape, you cannot just rest on the sofa and stare at an exercise video. You must decide what is important to you and then ask yourself this question: "Is the gain worth the pain?"

You can tell the importance of being in shape every time you climb several flights of stairs or run at break-neck speed in order to catch your connecting flight at the airport. If you are not in shape, you wheeze and hold your side in pain; if you are in shape you are comfortable and take it all in stride. If your choice is to endure exercise, then you endure the stress on your body.

The same is true with a church: a church is either strong or weak. This passage is a clear picture of what it takes to make a church strong. A church never needs strength any more than

when it is under savage attack and persecution. The Thessalonian church was being fiercely persecuted, yet it was standing fast for Christ. The Thessalonian believers stand as a model church for all other churches: they are a picture of what a church should be when it is being attacked and persecuted.

OUTLINE:

1. The ministers are faithful to the church (v.1).

2. The believers have a firm foundation in God and in Christ (v.1).

The believers know the grace and peace of God (v.2).
 The believers have a faith that grows exceedingly (v.3).

5. The believers have a love that grows and overflows (v.3).

6. The believers have a strong endurance and faith in all their trials (v.4-5).

1. THE MINISTERS ARE FAITHFUL TO THE CHURCH (v.1).

Ministers are always to be faithful to their churches, but there are times when ministers need to give special attention to their flock, special times when the flock of God needs to be strongly encouraged and exhorted to hold fast to Christ. The Thessalonian church was facing one of these times.

1. The church was being savagely attacked and persecuted by both the world and the religionists (see 1 Th.2:1-12). They were being...

ridiculed

threatened

ostracized

cursed

mocked

rejected

There is a chance that some had even been physically attacked, beaten, and martyred. Whatever the case, the point is this: the believers desperately needed the help of their ministers; they needed their encouragement and comfort.

2. The church was confused about the return of the Lord and the great day of the Lord, and about the awful day of His wrath. Apparently some had begun to feel that the tribulation-the terrible time of trouble that is to come upon the earth--had already begun. Some felt this because of the savage persecution they were suffering. There were other matters concerning the second coming that were misunderstood as well. In fact, there was great confusion in the church about the Lord's return. These will be covered in a later passage. For now, the point to see is how confused the believers were over the return of the Lord Jesus. They needed the help of their ministers; they needed to be taught the truth about the coming again of Jesus Christ.

APPLICATION:

When special needs arise among believers, the minister of God must give special attention to the flock of God. It is a very special duty of the minister to comfort and encourage his people when they...

• suffer persecution

need to be taught

• suffer disease or accident

face death

need correction

need reproof

need reproof
 need counsel

The list could go on and on, but the point is clearly seen. The minister must give special attention and help to his people when they face special needs. A church can be a model (strong) church only if its ministers are faithful--especially faithful when its people are facing trying times.

"I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said. It is more blessed to give then to receive" (Acts 20:35).

OUESTIONS:

1. What special qualities does your minister have that make him so faithful?

2. What can you do to help your minister as he leads the church to be strong against the trials and persecutions of this world?

3. What role has God enabled you to do when someone in your church is persecuted?

2. THE BELIEVERS HAVE A FIRM FOUNDATION IN GOD AND IN CHRIST (v.1).

Jesus Christ is said to be equal with God the Father. God is acknowledged as the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the distinctive belief upon which the church is built.

"God so loved the world, that He gave His <u>only begotten Son</u>, that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life" (Jn.3:16).

⇒ We believe that God the Father sent His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, into the world to save us from perishing and to give us eternal life.

⇒ We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

⇒ We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Lord sent from heaven, that He is God, the eternal Son embodied in human flesh and sent to earth by God the Father.

⇒ We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is Jesus the Carpenter from Nazareth.

⇒ We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Christ, the Messiah and Savior who had been promised from the very beginning of history.

As stated, it is upon this confession that the church is built. This confession is the one distinctive mark of the church.

"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Mt.16:18).

ILLUSTRATION:

Jesus has warned believers: if they build their lives on sand, the storms of life will wash them away (Mt.7:26-27). This vivid point has been illustrated time and again by those who have built expensive homes on the beach.

Years ago, a man ignored the advice of his financial counselor and his building contractor. He invested a good part of his life's savings by building a home with a great view of the sea.

For him, the closer to the sea the better.

He built his home right on the beach. When the storm season arrived, a devastating hurricane hit the beach and totally destroyed his home. As he surveyed his loss, a reporter asked him: "Why did you take the risk to build your home so close to the beach?" With a heavy heart, he replied, "I never thought a storm would hit the beach in my life-time."

Contrary to some popular beliefs, Christians are not exempt from the storms of life. We have no choice about some of the storms that come our way, but we do make significant choices about where we build our lives: on the solid Rock of Jesus Christ or upon the shifting sands of this world.

"And every one who hears these words of Mine, and does not act upon them, will be like a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and it fell, and great was its fall" (Mt.7:26-27, NASB)

How firm is your foundation?

OUESTIONS:

1. Why is it important for you to build your life on a firm foundation?

2. What are some areas of life that you build on shifting sand? What are some ways that you can prevent this from happening?

3. What have you built on a firm foundation that will stand the strength of a storm? How confident are you that what you have built will not be lost? Why?

3. THE BELIEVERS KNOW THE GRACE AND PEACE OF GOD (v.2).

- 1. Grace means the undeserved favor and blessings of God. No church can be strong...
 - without the favor of God.

• without the blessings of God.

When we see a strong church, the hand of God is immediately noticed: the hand that favors the church and blesses it. What is it that brings the hand of God's grace to a church? Note the exact wording of this verse: "Grace be to you...from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." Grace comes from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. God pours His grace out upon the church that commits itself to the confession...

that God is our Father.

that Jesus is the Lord Jesus Christ.

"And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (1 Tim.1:14-15).

ILLUSTRATION:

Grace has been defined by some as: "God's Riches At Christ's Expense." It is impossible to understand grace unless we come to realize that it is by no means cheap.

The grace of God is very expensive.

One day during the heat of a military battle, a grenade was thrown right in the middle of a platoon. Instinctively, stricken with terrifying fear, the men dove for cover. In the twinkling of an eye, one of the soldiers also made a choice to dive on top of the live grenade. Absorbing the lethal fragments of death, his act of heroism saved the lives of the other men that day. His act of grace gave his friends an opportunity to live long and fruitful lives.

In the same sense, that is what God has done through Christ. He sent His Son into the war for the souls of men. As each of us dove for cover, Christ absorbed the lethal fragments of our sin. Upon the cross, He actually bore our sins for us. A grenade that would have killed mankind for eternity was neutralized by God's love for us. God actually gave His Son to die upon the cross for our sins. Because of God's Riches at

Christ's Expense, we can live long and fruitful lives.

Have you received His grace by faith, or are you still subject to facing the grenade of eternal death and separation from God?

- 2. Peace means to be bound, joined, and woven together. It means to be assured, confident, and secure in the love and care of God. It means to sense and know that God will...
 - guide
 provide
 strengthen
 sustain
 deliver
 encourage
 empower
 bless

But again, note that peace comes only from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. In order to have the peace of God and Christ, a church has to have a strong confession...

in God as the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ.

in Jesus as the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Father and Christ alone can bring peace to the hearts of men, and that peace can be given only to those who come to God for peace. The Father and Christ cannot give peace to a person who does not come to God for peace. The point is this: a strong church is a body of people who know and experience the peace of God as they walk throughout the world day by day.

"But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us" (Eph.2:13-14).

OUESTIONS:

1. When do you sense God's grace the most? Why?

2. Contrast the peace of God with the peace of men. Are you a vessel for godly peace to flow into your church and through your church? How?

4. If a church is not built on the proper foundation of Christ, can it possess God's peace?

4. THE BELIEVERS HAVE A FAITH THAT GROWS EXCEEDINGLY (v.3).

The word exceedingly means to grow beyond measure, to grow far beyond what would be expected. What a glorious testimony! Faith that just grows and grows more and more. Imagine a church full of believers whose faith in Christ Jesus grows explosively-beyond measure-beyond what we could ever imagine. And remember: the church was growing in faith while they were in the midst of savage persecution. This is the reason Paul says: "We are bound to thank God always for you." The word bound means compulsion and obligation. The church's growing faith compelled Paul to thank God for the church-for their faith. Imagine how a minister's heart would joy and rejoice over his people growing like the Thessalonian believers did.

What does it mean to have a growing faith? Faith in Christ simply means that a person be-

lieves in the Lord Jesus Christ; he trusts Christ to take care of his life...

• of his past life (sins and transgressions).

• of his present life (to provide the necessities, protection, deliverance, and guidance needed in life).

• of his future life (deliverance from death and judgment and the gift of eternal life).

A growing faith in Jesus Christ simply means that a person learns to trust and depend upon Christ more and more:

⇒ to provide for his daily necessities (Mt.6:33).

⇒ to deliver him through the trials and temptations of life (2 Th.2:4f).

⇒ to comfort him through the losses of life (2 Tim.4:18; 1 Pt.5:7; Ps.23:4).

 \Rightarrow to teach him the truth (2 Th.2:15; 3:3).

⇒ to guide and help him to hold fast to the teachings of Christ (2 Th.2:15; 3:4).

to strengthen him to walk a life that is separated from the world and totally dedicated to God (2 Th.3:3, 6-7).

APPLICATION 1:

A person who grows in faith is a person who learns to depend upon Christ more and more in every area of life--all the areas covered in the list above. What a glorious testimony to have a faith that grows exceedingly!

APPLICATION 2:

Too many believers have their minds upon growing and increasing in the comfort and possessions of this world. They think little, if any, about growing in faith. They are satisfied with just enough faith to salve their conscience. Growth in faith and Christ are of little concern to them.

"Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth" (Mk.9:23).

O	П	R	C7		n	N	C.
v	U.		•	V۱	v	T A	13 a

1. What does it mean to have a growing faith?

2. In gardening terms, how would you describe your current depth of faith:

My garden is nourished by plenty of water, sunshine, and fertilizer.

____I've got some roots, but the soil is kind of rocky.
____I've got no roots at all. My seeds are scattered on the top of the soil.

My garden is full of weeds.

Explain why you chose one of the above responses. What can you do to improve your situation?

3. What is the hardest area for you to turn over to Christ's care? Why?

5. THE BELIEVERS HAVE A LOVE THAT GROWS AND OVERFLOWS (v.3).

Note: the love being spoken about here is the love of believer for believer, not for the world. In the letter of 1 Thessalonians, Paul had exhorted the church to grow more and more in love for one another. They had needed the message because there was some tension in the church surrounding the Lord's return. Paul's exhortation had worked: the church had straightened out the differences and the differing parties were now walking hand in hand with one another, overflowing and growing in love for one another. This is the reason Paul thanks God for their overflowing love.

What does it mean to overflow with love for one another? An overflowing love is the kind of

love...

- that binds individuals together as a family--as the family of God.
- that binds individuals in an unbreakable union.
- that holds individuals with the deepest affection.

• that nourishes and nurtures others.

• that shows concern and looks after the welfare of others.

 that always cherishes one another and comforts, supports, and encourages others regardless of differences or circumstances.

This was the kind of love that the model church at Thessalonica had. This is what an abounding love is. This is the kind of love every single believer is to have for all other believers.

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (Jn.13:34-35).

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the secret to having a growing and overflowing love for one another?

2. Are you practicing this kind of love on a regular basis? What can you do to improve in this area of your life?

3. Why would an overflowing love be essential for a church that was being persecuted?

4. When afflictions and persecutions come to fellow believers in your church, what can you do help them?

6. THE BELIEVERS HAVE A STRONG ENDURANCE AND FAITH IN ALL THEIR TRIALS (v.4-5).

⇒ The word patience means to be stedfast, to endure, and to persevere. The Thessalonian believers endured and held fast to their faith in Christ through all the persecutions and

tribulations thrown against them.

- The word *tribulations* is a more general word than persecutions and refers to any kind of trial or trouble. The Thessalonian believers were persevering and holding fast to their faith through all the trials of life: temptations, peer pressure, disease, accident, loss of job, death--whatever the trial was, they remained faithful to Christ. They did not buckle under and give in to the crowd nor to discouragement and despair. They held on to their faith in Christ. Note three points.
- 1. Their endurance and faith was a strong testimony to others. Paul says they were so strong that he actually boasted of them to others.

APPLICATION:

What a dynamic testimony: to stand up for Christ to such an extent that Paul would boast of them! What an example for us: to stand fast in our faith to such an extent that ministers boast of our testimony.

2. Their endurance and faith were a sign of God's coming judgment upon unbelievers. The believers received a supernatural strength--God's strength--when they were persecuted. Their strength was so forceful that it was clear that it was being given by God. The believers...

were not becoming hysterical.

• were not retaliating.

• were not accepting the persecution like passive sheep.

Contrariwise, they demonstrated a serene peace and responded in an active love, exhorting and encouraging their persecutors to trust the Lord--all while they were in the midst of being mistreated. Their response could not be attributed to mental discipline nor to the commitment to some human cause. Why?

⇒ Because there were too many of them, and they were all standing fast and demon-

strating some supernatural strength.

Because there was both the spirit of glory and of God resting upon them-the spirit of glory and of God that is promised to the believer who suffers persecution.

"If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified" (1 Pt.4:14).

⇒ The point is this: the presence of God and His glory in the believer is a clear sign that God exists and that He is going to vindicate his dear believer. He is going to judge and take vengeance upon the persecutors of His dear people. Persecution is a clear sign of God's coming judgment.

"The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished" (2 Pt.2:9).

3. Their endurance and faith proved that the believers were counted worthy of God's kingdom. Note the phrase "counted worthy." It does not mean to make worthy; it means to count, reckon, and declare worthy. A believer is not saved because he remains faithful through the sufferings of this life; he is saved because he believes in Jesus Christ as his Savior and Lord. However, when he suffers in this world and endures through the suffering, he is counted worthy of God's kingdom. He does not disappoint God. He proves his grit-that he is truly a man or a woman of God. He is worthy to enter heaven, for he has proven his faith.

"For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise" (Heb.10:36).

ILLUSTRATION:

Have you ever thought to yourself, "I wish I could be stronger in my faith. I wish I

could be a strong Christian and really make a difference in people's lives"?

A certain man related this thought to God one day while he was praying. Up to this point in time, he had the "Midas touch." It seemed that everything he put his hand to was a success. On the surface, he had no major difficulties. He had a good job and a good education. He had a family that was together. He was a man who had no problems--and it was evident to those who knew him.

One day while praying, he expressed a burden to reach out to people who had problems. He was constantly frustrated that no one ever sought him out for counsel. As he meditated on this desire, the Lord spoke to him in that still, small voice that often comes to believers when praying. "No one wants your counsel because they can't re-

late to someone who has no problems.

"That's it!", he exclaimed. "I've gone about this all wrong. Lord, whatever it takes, help me to better relate to people." It was only a few days later that he lost his Midas touch. He lost his job unexpectedly. Two months later, his parents divorced. On the way to run an errand, he was in a car accident. Little did he realize that God was answering his prayer by allowing a variety of trials to touch his life to which others could relate. Needless to say, the man was crushed, devastated by so much happening all at once. But God strengthened the man and carried him through all the trials, working all things out for good.

From that simple desire to be used by God, he was sharpened and strengthened. In the following years, he was able to use the testimony of God's strength to encourage

hundreds of people.

Are you willing to take a risk and open your life to God's dealings?

OUESTIONS:

1. Do you consider your faith to be as strong as it could be? Why or why not?

2. Was there a time when your faith was all that got you through some trial in life?

3. What value does a strong endurance and faith have in your witness to others?

4. What is the secret to having a strong endurance and faith during trials?

SUMMARY:

There is no better time than now to help your church become a strong model in times of persecution. There is a great temptation to allow others to do the work by themselves, but every believer must be firmly committed to do his part.

In order to get yourself into shape to help, you need to get off of the sofa and be willing to accept the pain for the gain. No one likes pain, but the gain of being strong when you are afflicted or persecuted is well worth the effort of serving Christ faithfully.

- 1. The ministers are faithful to the church.
- 2. The believers have a firm foundation in God and in Christ.
- The believers know the grace and peace of God.The believers have a faith that grows exceedingly.

	4. 5. 6.	The believers have a faith that The believers have a love that The believers have a strong en	grows exceedingly. grows and overflows. durance and faith in all their trials.	
		PERSO!	NAL JOURNAL NOTES: effection & Response)	
1.	The	most important thing that I learn	ned from this lesson was:	
2.	The	area that I need to work on the	most is:	
3.	I can	apply this lesson to my life by:	:	
4.	Clos	ng Statement Of Commitment:		

Leon Morris. The Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians. "Tyndale New Testament Commentaries," p.115.

		II. A GLIMPSE IN-	destruction from the	a.	Punishment & de-
ш		TO THE END	presence of the Lord,		struction
Ш		TIME, 1:6-2:17	and from the glory of	b.	Separation from the
		, and the second	his power;		Lord A Marie
			10 When he shall	5. Th	e time of judgment
		A. The Righteous	come to be glorified in	a.	When He comes to
		Judgment of God,	his saints, and to be		be glorified in His
		1:6-12	admired in all them		saints
			that believe (because	b.	When He comes to
1	. The purpose of	6 Seeing it is a right-	our testimony among		be marvelled at
	judgment: To rec-		you was believed) in		
	tify injustice		that day.	6. Th	e escape from
2	. The executor of		11 Wherefore also we		igment
	judgment: Jesus	trouble you;	pray always for you,		God must count a
ш	Christ Himself	7 And to you who are	that our God would		person worthy to
ш	a. A spectacular ap-		count you worthy of		escape
	pearance from		this calling, and fulfil		God must complete
	heaven		all the good pleasure		the work of faith in
	21000 1 021		of his goodness, and		a person
	b. With angels		the work of faith with		- F
	c. In flaming fire	8 In flaming fire tak-		c.	The name of Christ
3	The people to be judged		12 That the name of	-	must be glorified in
	a. All who do not		our Lord Jesus Christ		a person
ш	know God		may be glorified in		a po. 501.
	b. All who disobey		you, and ye in him,		
	the gospel		according to the grace		
4	. The penalty of	9 Who shall be pun-	of our God and the		
	judgment	ished with everlasting			
	Jacking	Direct William C Veritabiling	Dora Coda Cin ist.		

Section II A GLIMPSE INTO THE END TIME 2 Thessalonians 1:6-2:17

Study 1: THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT OF GOD

Text: 2 Thessalonians 1:6-12

Aim: To make sure--absolutely sure--of this one thing: That you escape the righteous judgment of God.

Memory Verse:

"Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness. and the work of faith with power" (2 Thessalonians 1:11).

INTRODUCTION:

Have you ever had to stand before a judge? Hopefully not. But if you did, you found yourself at the mercy of the sentencing judge. If you were found guilty of breaking the law, the judge had the right to place the full weight of the law upon you. The possibility of this happening is a detriment to many people, and it prevents them from pursuing a life of crime. They do not want to face a judge's wrath, so they choose to live on the right side of the law. A healthy fear of judgment keeps them straight.

This begins the important discussion of the end time, of the end of the world. The first discussion covers the subject that most people dread and try to bypass or deny: the righteous judgment of God.

OUTLINE:

1. The purpose of judgment: to rectify injustice (v.6).

2. The executor of judgment: Jesus Christ Himself (v.7-8).

The people to be judged (v.8).
The penalty of judgment (v.9).
The time of judgment (v.10).

6. The escape from judgment (v.11-12).

1. THE PURPOSE OF JUDGMENT: TO RECTIFY INJUSTICE (v.6).

Remember: the believers at Thessalonica were suffering fierce persecution and all kinds of trouble at the hands of their neighbors and the local city government. Most of the citizens of Thessalonica wanted nothing to do with Christ, so they sought to stamp out His name, threatening and persecuting all who confessed Him. Just how serious the situation had become can be seen by looking at the account in Acts and the number of times the persecution is referred to in the two letters to the Thessalonians. Note these verses.

"But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them [Paul and Silas] out to the people. And when they found them, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also; whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus. And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things" (Acts 17:5-8).

The suffering of the believers was terrifying; therefore, they needed encouragement. Paul had done this in the former passage (2 Th.1:3-5) and would do it again at the end of the present passage (2 Th.1:10-12). But something else was needed as well: the persecutors and unbelievers of the world needed to be warned. God is going to rectify all the injustices of the world. God's judgment is going to fall upon every person who has mistreated others. All unjust behavior of men will bear the terrible judgment of God, all the...

ridiculing cheating killing mocking fighting abusing arguing stealing cursing deceiving gossiping misusing criticizing rejecting lying ignoring hoarding defrauding

The list could go on and on, but the point is this: we live in the midst of an evil and an unjust people. Therefore, much of the world's behavior--much of man's behavior--is evil and unjust. God must judge the world, for judgment is righteous and just. To judge the injustices of men is the very thing that must be done. All the injustices of the world must be corrected. Not to judge would be wrong and unjust. This is the reason God is going to judge the world. He is just and righteous Himself; therefore, His very nature demands that all the injustices and wrongs that men have inflicted upon others be judged and punished. Note how the verse is translated by others:

⇒ "For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you" (NASB, 2 Th.1:6).

⇒ "Indeed, it is right for God to repay with crushing sorrows those who

cause you these crushing sorrows" (Williams, 2 Th.1:6).

⇒ "It really is just for God to pay back with suffering those who make

you suffer" (Beck, 2 Th.1:6).

⇒ "[It is a fair decision] since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with distress and affliction those who distress and afflict you" (Amplified New Testament, 2 Th.1:6).

OUESTIONS:

1. Have you ever taken things into your own hands when someone has done you wrong? How does this verse help you to trust God to rectify injustices, to right the wrongs done to you?

2. Do you ever feel like God has forgotten about your pain from persecution? Whose time-

frame is the best when it comes to seeking justice?

3. What sort of attitude are you supposed to have when you are persecuted?

2. THE EXECUTOR OF JUDGMENT: JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF (v.7-8).

Note that Jesus Christ is coming to give rest to the believer as well as to judge the world. The believer will be released from the injustices, sufferings, and death of this world. As the Pulpit Commentary says:

a. "[Heaven] is rest to the weary, freedom to the enslaved, release from sorrow, suffering, and pain, relaxation from toil, ease from noise and turmoil, the quiet heaven of peace after being tossed about in the tempestuous ocean [of this world]."1

"There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God" (Heb.4:9).

Note that the Person who will execute judgment is Jesus Christ Himself. He is personally

going to return to earth to judge the world.

His return in judgment will be a spectacular appearance from heaven. The word revealed means to be unveiled and uncovered. The day is coming when Jesus Christ shall rend or split the heavens and return to earth in judgment. He will be revealed as the Supreme Majesty and Judge of the world.

"For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (Jn.5:22).

His return in judgment will be with the angels of His power. The angels will return with Him for several purposes:

⇒ to add to the majestic glory and triumph of His person and presence.

"For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works" (Mt.16:27).

⇒ to carry out His orders and to execute His justice and mercy.

"The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels" (Mt.13:39).

3. His return in judgment will be in flaming fire. This is a reference to the brilliance and glory and holiness of His appearance, to the fact that He is coming in judgment. His return in judgment will be in all the majesty and glory of God Himself--so brilliant that it will be as the flaming fire of God's pure holiness.

"And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Mt.24:30).

OUESTIONS:

1. Why is it important that Jesus Christ be the executor of judgment? What would the world be like if you were the executor of judgment?

2. When Christ returns to judge the world, He will tear open the skies and appear

with His angels in flaming fire. What does this tell you about His power?

3. Do you worry about whether Christ will fairly judge those who have persecuted you? Why or why not?

3. THE PEOPLE TO BE JUDGED (v.8).

The people to be judged are separated into two classes.

1. All who do not know God, the only living and true God, shall be judged. Who are these persons? They are those who sin against natural revelation, who look at creation and fail to see God or to live by the laws that are clearly seen in nature and creation.

a. Men can know God within themselves: in their own thoughts, reasonings, and con-

sciences.

"Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them" (Ro.1:19).

b. Men can know God outside of themselves: in creation and nature, the earth and outer space. (See Ro.1:19; 1:20; 1:21; 2:11-15.)

"Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness" (Acts 14:17).

The point is this: men can know that God gives them life, that He cares and provides for them, that He runs everything in an orderly and lawful way, giving purpose and meaning to life. Men can look at nature and see that God is great and good; therefore, God deserves to be glorified and given thanks. But instead of seeing God and coming to know God, men have rejected Him. Instead of worshipping God...

• some worship the creation, that is, science and man--a humanistic worship.

• some worship the god of their imagination, a thought or image of what God is (a god that allows them to live as they desire).

They are the persons who are to be judged. They are the persons who do not know the living

and true God, not personally--not in a personal day-to-day relationship.

2. All who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ shall be judged. Who are these persons?

⇒ Every person who has ever heard the gospel of Jesus Christ and rejected it.

⇒ Every person who has professed the gospel of Jesus Christ but does not obey the commandments of the gospel.

⇒ Every person who has been baptized but does not obey the commandments of the

gospel.

⇒ Every person who has joined the church and holds a membership in the church but does not obey the commandments of the gospel.

"But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: bur rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them" (Eph.5:3-7).

ILLUSTRATION:

Every professing Christian needs to take certain steps to make sure--absolutely sure--that his profession is genuine, or else he will have to appear before Christ with a false profession. A tragic moment pulled from the pages of history illustrates this fact.

"In July 1976, Israeli commandos made a daring raid at an airport in Entebbe, Uganda, in which 103 Jewish hostages were freed. In less than 15 minutes, the

soldiers had killed all seven kidnappers and set the captives free.

"As successful as the rescue was, however, three of the hostages were killed during the raid. As the commandos entered the terminal, they shouted in Hebrew, 'Get down! Crawl!' The Jewish hostages understood and lay down on the floor, while the guerrillas, who did not speak Hebrew, were left standing. Quickly the rescuers shot the upright kidnappers.

"But two of the hostages hesitated--perhaps to see what was happening--and were also cut down. One young man was lying down and actually stood up when the commandos entered the airport. He, too, was shot with the bullets meant for the enemy. Had these three heeded the soldier's command, they would have been

freed with the rest of the captives.

"Salvation is open to all, but we must heed Christ's command to repent and make Him Lord. Otherwise, we will perish with the judgment meant for the Enemy."

You might not be fluent in Hebrew, but it will be to your great gain to know the language of obedience.

OUESTIONS:

1. Was there a time when you failed to obey the Lord? What were some of the short-term consequences of your failure to obey?

2. Do you think it is possible for a Christian to fall under God's judgment? Explain

your answer using Scripture.

3. Do you think a true Christian believer will live a life of disobedience before God? Just continue on and on to disobey God? What kinds of things do you need to guard against?

4. THE PENALTY OF JUDGMENT (v.9).

The penalty of judgment will be terrible, but it will be deserved. Why? Because those who are to be judged had the opportunity to know God, but they chose to deny and curse Him, walking as they desired throughout life. Note three significant facts about the penalty and punishment of judgment.

1. The word who here means "persons who are of such a kind as to" deserve the punish-

ment of the coming judgment.3

2. The phrase "shall suffer punishment" means to pay the penalty. Matthew Henry says that "they did sin's work, and must receive sin's wages." Sinners may get away with their sin and rejection of God while on corth but they will be did sin's wages.

and rejection of God while on earth, but they will be punished in the final analysis.

Note another fact about the punishment. The punishment will be righteous, just-exactly what the person deserves, no more, no less. God's punishment will not be vindictive; it will be perfectly just, a punishment of retribution--a punishment that pays a person exactly what he deserves.

"And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire" (Mt.18:9).

3. The words eternal destruction do not mean annihilation or ceasing to exist. They mean exactly what they say in this verse: to be separated from the face of the Lord and from the glory of His power--an eternity of woe.⁵ They mean complete ruin and loss; to be cut off, excluded, removed, separated, extinguished, deprived, abhorred, and banished from all the good things of life.

⇒ Complete ruin and loss: from all that life should be.

⇒ Cut off: from the presence of God and from the glory of His power and of heaven.

⇒ Excluded: from all joy, pleasure and satisfaction. It is utter emptiness.

Removed: from all companionship and associations and from all possessions. It is being left all alone and left with nothing. It is utter loneliness.

⇒ Separated: from the presence of all goodness and righteousness--from God and from all those who sought after righteousness. And there is no prospect of the separation ever ending, not even for an hour.

⇒ Extinguished: from love and affection. It is a hell of passion let loose.

⇒ Deprived: from the Holy Spirit's restraining the force of evil. It is a hell of law-lessness.

⇒ Abhorred: from the bodies of glory. It is a decayed carcass (Is.66:23-24).

⇒ Banished: from all hope. It is being eternally lost forever, and there is no prospect of the banishment ever ending--not even for one hour.

Leon Morris quotes the Biblical scholar James Denny as saying:

"If there is any truth in Scripture at all, this is true--that those who stubbornly refuse to submit to the gospel, and to love and obey Jesus Christ, incur at the Last Advent an infinite and irreparable loss. They pass into a night on which no morning [ever] dawns."

"Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn" (Mt.13:30).

OUESTIONS:

1. Why will the judgment of Christ be so harsh for the unbeliever?

2. Will a sinner get what he deserves? Give a Scriptural basis for your answer.

3. Is God fair or just? Why?

4. How should the reality of judgment affect us? How should it affect our witness to others?

5. THE TIME OF JUDGMENT (v.10).

Unbelievers are going to be judged...

 when Jesus Christ comes to be glorified in His saints and to be admired in all who believe.

Note the word in. When Jesus Christ returns, His glory is going to be seen in His saints. All the world will see the wonder and glory of...

the height of His love.

the depth of His mercy.the length of His grace.

• the breadth of His power.

The Lord Jesus Christ has loved and saved us; and the height, depth, length, and breadth of His salvation is beyond imagination. His salvation far exceeds anything that we could ever know or describe. When the glory of what Jesus Christ has done for us is manifested, it will explode into a spectacular demonstration of glory--into a spectacle that will exceed the explosion of all the brilliant lights of the heavenly bodies. The greatness of the glory and love of Jesus Christ will be seen in that day--seen in His dear saints and in all them who believe.

Note one other significant point: He will not only be glorified in that day, He will be admired. Philips' translation says, "It will be a breath-taking wonder." Leon Morris says, "the glory of that day will far surpass anything of which we can have any idea...and when we do be-

hold it we shall be lost in amazement."7

OUESTIONS:

1. When are unbelievers going to be judged?

2. What kind of reaction will come from those who watch this judgment? Why?

3. Why is the love of God and the judgment of God not a contradiction of terms?

6. THE ESCAPE FROM JUDGMENT (v.11-12).

Three things are necessary to escape judgment. Note that these two verses are a prayer of Paul for the believers.

- 1. A person must be counted worthy by God. How can a person be counted worthy? No person has any worthiness of his own; no person is perfect. Therefore, no person has enough goodness to stand before God, for God is perfect. If a person is to be acceptable to God, he has to approcah God through faith in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. God accepts a person as worthy only if he comes in the name of Jesus Christ-believing in and trusting Jesus Christ to save him. The person who comes to God through Jesus Christ honors Christ, and any person who honors Christ is counted worthy by God. Note: we are not worthy; we possess no righteousness of our own. But God counts and credits us with righteousness because we come to Him in the perfect righteousness of His Son. We honor God's Son and God honors anyone who honors His Son.
- 2. God must complete the work of faith in us. We age, deteriorate, die, and decay. We cannot complete anything, not permanently. We can complete something for only a few short years at most, and even then we cannot complete anything perfectly. Nothing that we do is ever perfected. Therefore, if we are to be saved from judgment and given eternal life, God has to take our initial belief in Christ...

• and complete the good pleasure of His goodness in us.

- and complete the work of faith in us--complete it with omnipotent power.
- The name of Christ must be glorified in us and we in Him. This simply means that...
 we must let Him live and move and have His being in us--every day.
 - we must live and move and have our being in Him-every day.

we must let Him be glorified in us.

This is the only way to escape judgment. A person can know that he will escape the judgment of God...

if he has trusted Jesus Christ as his Savior and Lord.

• if he knows that God is completing the work of faith in him.

• if he is honoring the name of the Lord and letting the Lord glorify Himself in his life.

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Rev.3:20).

ILLUSTRATION:

Thankfully, God has made a way to escape eternal judgment. Tom M. Olson, in Now, illustrates with this striking point:

"A Christian, as he entered a barber shop, heard a man say, 'I was born a sinner. It was no responsibility of mine. It would, therefore, be unjust for God to judge or condemn me for that in which I had no responsibility whatever, no matter what the Bible or preachers say!' The Christian pointed out that the Bible does not say God will condemn us because we are born sinners, but that He will do so if we remain sinners, rejecting the Saviour, by whom He has opened the way of escape

for us.

"He used this illustration: 'Suppose someone has occasion to pass your door at midnight, and notices that fire has broken out in your house. You are asleep, unaware of the danger you are in; the alarm is given and you are awakened. In this circumstance, what would your responsibility be?' 'Well,' the man answered, 'surely I would be responsible to heed the warning and escape as quickly as possible.' 'But supposing you were to answer the one who warned you, 'I didn't set this building on fire, and have no responsibility for it,' and so remain in the house. What then?" 'In that case,' he said, 'I would be a fool, and responsible if I lost my life.'"

There is a raging fire in the house of mankind. Have you found the Fire Escape?

OUESTIONS:

1. What is necessary in order for someone to escape judgment? Have you trusted Christ as your Savior and Lord? Are you going to escape the judgment of God?

2. How does an understanding of judgment affect how you live your life?

3. What do these verses tell you about God's promise to spare you from His righteous judgment?

4. What is the importance of prayer in evangelism and missions with relation to

reaching the lost?

SUMMARY:

Have you made certain that you have avoided a court date with the righteous judge, the Lord Jesus Christ? It is imperative that you be aware of these strong warnings from Scripture:

1. The purpose of judgment: to rectify injustice.

2. The executor of judgment: Jesus Christ Himself.

3. The people to be judged.

- 5. The time of judgment.
- 6. The escape from judgment.

If you trust in Christ, He will pronounce this statement over you: "Not guilty!"

PERSONAL JOURNAL NOTES: (Reflection & Response)

1.	The most	important	thing	that I	learned	from	this	lesson	was:	
----	----------	-----------	-------	--------	---------	------	------	--------	------	--

2. The area that I need to work on the most is:

3. I can apply this lesson to my life by:

4. Closing Statement of Commitment:

Matthew Henry's Commentary, Vol.6, p.795.

A.T. Robertson. Word Pictures in the New Testament, Vol.4, p.44.

P.J. Gloag. Second Thessalonians. "The Pulpit Commentary," Vol.21, ed. by H.D.M. Spence and Joseph S.Exell. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1950), p.2.

² Craig B. Larson, Editor. *Illustrations for Preaching & Teaching*, p.168.

³ A.T. Robertson. *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Vol.4, p.44; and Leon Morris. *The Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians*. "Tyndale New Testament Commentaries," p.119.

The Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians. "Tyndale New Testament Commentaries," p.120. Ibid. p.120.

Walter B. Knight. Knight's Treasury of 2,000 Illustrations, p.192.

by the day of the Lord a. Look to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering togethe unto him,	you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the you—watch for two events first a. A great falling away b. A revelation of the antichrist
--	--

Section II A GLIMPSE INTO THE END TIME 2 Thessalonians 1:6-2:17

Study 2: THE DAY OF THE LORD

Text: 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3

Aim: To guard against being deceived: The day of the Lord is coming.

Memory Verse:

"That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand" (2 Thessalonians 2:2).

INTRODUCTION:

Have you ever seen a man walking down the street holding a sign that says: "Repent! Judgment is near!"?

That message is not taken very seriously by the majority of people these days. The man is pictured as rather eccentric and out of touch with reality. But is the day of the Lord to be taken seriously? Yes, it is. What, then, does the Bible say about the day of the Lord?

When the Bible refers to the day of Christ or the day of the Lord, it does not mean a single day in history. It is using the word day in a forceful or emphatic sense just like men do when they speak of the great day of space exploration or the great day of some world leader or the great day of creation. The day of the Lord covers a long span of time and some very significant events. In the Bible it covers the whole span of history beginning with the two events of this passage, reaching forward to the end of time. It will be a terrible time of trouble, a time that is known as that great and terrible day of judgment, the day when the wrath of God will fall upon all the meanness, viciousness, ugliness, and filthiness of men. However, note the point of this passage: no believer has to fear the day of the Lord. The day of the Lord launches God's judgment against unbelievers; it is not the judgment of believers.

OUTLINE:

- 1. Guard against being shaken or troubled by the day of the Lord (v.1-2).
- 2. Let no man deceive you--watch for two events first (v.3).

1. GUARD AGAINST BEING SHAKEN OR TROUBLED BY THE DAY OF THE LORD (v.1-2).

The believers at Thessalonica thought the day of the Lord had begun--that great and terrible day when God's judgment is to fall upon the earth. Verse two explains why. Remember: the believers were suffering fierce persecution (see 2 Th.1:6). They were suffering as much as human beings could bear; apparently some were even being martyred. Verse two says that some person was even claiming...

that a spirit (some angel or some vision) had revealed to him that the day of the

Lord had begun.

• that he had a special word, a special revelation from God that the day of the Lord had begun.

that he had either received or heard about a letter from Paul that said the day of the

Lord was at hand.

Combine these three claims with the suffering of savage persecution and it is easily understood why some of the believers would be shaken and troubled. In fact, the word *shaken* means to be tossed about, agitated, shocked; and the word *troubled* means a continued state of tension and nervousness. Paul says two quick things that we must keep in mind as we look toward the day of the Lord.

1. Look to the coming of the Lord and toward our gathering together unto Him, not to the judgment that is coming. Note that this is an appeal from Paul, an urgent appeal: he beseeches his brothers in the Lord. And he beseeches them "by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him." The point is striking: the believer is to focus upon the Lord's return and not upon the judgment of the Lord's day. The day of the Lord is to be the judgment of unbelievers, not of believers. The believer is not appointed to receive the wrath of God; he is appointed to salvation. Therefore, he is not to fear the day of the Lord. He is to be looking to the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior, Jesus Christ.

"For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Th.5:9).

ILLUSTRATION:

As history marches on to a precise beat, the Christian believer needs to keep a Biblical perspective.

"A minister, while crossing the Bay of Biscay, became greatly alarmed as he beheld what he thought was an approaching hurricane. Trembling, he addressed himself to one of the sailors: 'Do you think she will be able to go through it?' 'Through what?' inquired the sailor. 'That awful hurricane that is coming down upon us.' The old sailor smiled and said: 'That storm will never touch us. It has passed us already.'

"So, in regard to the believer, judgment as to the penalty of our sins is past. We were tried, condemned, and executed in the person of our Surety, Jesus

Christ."

If you are a Christian believer, your greatest threat has passed. You can look forward to showers of blessings as you meet with the Savior.

2. Let nothing shake or trouble you about the day of the Lord: not a spirit, nor some so-called spiritual message, nor a writing from some so-called spiritual man. Note: the best manuscripts and the great majority of commentaries translate and understand this to be the day of the Lord instead of the "day of Christ."

OUESTIONS:

- 1. Is it easier for you to see the Lord as a coming Savior or as a wrathful God? Why?

 What kinds of things shake your faith? Why?
- 2. What kinds of things shake your faith? Why? What can you do to strengthen your faith?
- 3. What do you think are the greatest concerns of your church as it looks toward the coming of the Lord?

2. LET NO MAN DECEIVE YOU--WATCH FOR TWO EVENTS FIRST (v.3).

Watch for two significant events, for that day--the great and terrible day of the Lord--will not come until these two events happen. Note the emphasis upon guarding against deception: let no man deceive you by any means--no matter what any person says or claims or uses against you, do not let him deceive you about the day of the Lord. That terrible day--the day when God's judgment will begin to fall upon the world and its unbelievers--cannot come until these two events happen. But note: the idea is that these events will launch the day of the Lord, that is, the terrible judgment of God upon all those who have cursed, denied, ignored, neglected, and de-

famed the name of Him who is the holy Sovereign of the universe.

1. The first event that will launch the day of the Lord will be a great falling away of believers from God. The phrase "falling away" is much too weak for what the Greek says. The Greek is forceful: "falling away" means apostasy, revolt, rebellion. The picture is that of multitudes--millions from all over the world--rebelling and revolting against God. As the eminent scholar Leon Morris says: "In the last times there will be an outstanding manifestation of the powers of evil arrayed against God." The point is this: before the day of the Lord--before the terrible judgment of God can come upon the earth--there will be a great apostasy, a tragic turning away from God by millions. Note a most significant point: apostasy is one of the causes for the day of the Lord. The revolt and rebellion against God will be so massive that it will necessitate the return of Christ in judgment. Man and his world will be so evil and sinful, so immoral and unjust, so much in rebellion against God, that Christ has to return and to judge the world. Most of the people in the world will have gone so far that they will be beyond ever repenting.

"And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Mt.24:10-13).

ILLUSTRATION:

What would it be like to see millions turn away from their confession of Christ as Lord and Savior? It would be a vivid nightmare for any one of us to dream. Peek into one man's sleeping quarters. Right away, you see him tossing and turning, fighting to wake up from the horror which has gripped him. Allow him to share with you his horrible dream.

It was as if the world had turned upside down. I could hardly believe my eyes as people I knew turned their backs on God. These people went to church and knew the right things to say. But all of them met together and declared to God that they intended to finish the rebellion that Lucifer and his henchmen had begun ages ago. Only this time, they intended to dethrone God and assume control of creation.

Somehow, I got caught up in the excitement of the meeting and began to voice my support with the others. After I yelled 'Down with God!', I got this sick feeling in the pit of my stomach. My mind began to re-run old memories of all that God had done for me as a child. He had healed me from a serious sickness. He con-

stantly provided food and shelter for me and my family. We never went without the necessities.

What went wrong? To tell you the truth, I went wrong. I simply got tired of God telling me what to do. I found it to be a whole lot easier following other rebels than to follow the Good Shepherd. But, I've got to change some things now. In

my dream, the last scene made an impression on me that I'll never forget.

God swept His hand into that crowd of rebels and set us all up like dominos on their ends. And then, with a flick of His finger, each one toppled the other. As each one fell, the earth opened up and flames consumed them. I was the last domino. My eyes got bigger and bigger as the one before me rocked into me-and I began to fall backwards...and then I woke up, bathed in sweat!

When God starts to tip the dominos on the day of the Lord, will you be in the line, or will you stand aside and be counted with the faithful?

2. The second event that will launch the day of the Lord will be the revelation of that man of sin-the son of perdition, that is, the antichrist himself. Note the following facts:

The antichrist will be revealed. This fact indicates that he existed before his appearance. A.T. Robertson says. "the implication is that the man of sin is hidden

somewhere...[and] will be suddenly manifested."

b. The antichrist is "the man of sin." The word sin is better translated lawlessness; that is, the antichrist will be the man of lawlessness or of total rebellion against God. He will do all he can to lead a total revolt against God--do all he can to lead every man, woman, and child to turn away from God.

c. The antichrist is "the son of perdition." This means that he will be so evil that he will be just like the son of doom and destruction, of the devil himself. It also means

that he is doomed to destruction.

- d. The antichrist is not just another evil world leader who is a mass deceiver or murderer of millions. This is not what Scripture means in this passage. Scripture speaks of other antichrists, others who will appear in the world and mislead people and do much evil upon the earth (1 Jn.2:18; 2 Jn.7). However this Scripture is not dealing with antichrists (plural), but with the most infamous antichrist of all-the one antichrist...
 - who will launch the day of the Lord and who must appear before the day of the Lord can come.
 - who is so terrible that his very name is "this man of lawlessness" and "the son of perdition," that is, of doom and destruction.

Note: the antichrist is not Satan, but he is said to be a man who will be sent by the very "working of Satan" (cp. 2 Th.2:9).

APPLICATION:

Some idea of just how evil the antichrist will be can be gleaned by thinking of some of the evil men in history. Think of the evil of such mass murderers as Hitler, Stalin, and other dictators down through history who have slaughtered millions. Just think: their evil was nothing compared to the evil of the antichrist.

"But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation [the antichrist], spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judaea flee to the mountains" (Mk.13:14).

"And they worshipped the dragon [the devil] which gave power unto the beast [the antichrist]: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great

things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If any man have an ear, let him hear" (Rev.13:4-9).

OUESTIONS:

- 1. Are you satisfied with your level of commitment to the Lord? What could happen to make you fall away from the Lord?
- 2. What is the secret of keeping a close walk with the Lord?
- 3. What does the Bible say about the antichrist's character? What similar traits have you noticed in the evil men of your day?

SUMMARY:

The Christian believer has been given a comforting word on how to relate to the end times. Remember, you are to...

. Guard against being shaken or troubled by the day of the Lord.

2. Let no man deceive you--watch for two events first.

PERSONAL JOURNAL NOTES: (Reflection & Response)

- 1. The most important thing that I learned from this lesson was:
- 2. The area that I need to work on the most is:
- 3. I can apply this lesson to my life by:
- 4. Closing Statement of Commitment:

The King's Business. Walter B. Knight. 3,000 Illustrations for Christian Service, p.396.

The Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians. "Tyndale New Testament Commentaries," p.126. Leon Morris. The Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians. "Tyndale New Testament Commen-

taries," p.126.
A.T. Robertson. Word Pictures in the New Testament, Vol.4, p.50.

	The Man of Sin,	in his time. 7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already	
		work: only he who	work, but restrained
		now letteth will let,	
1. His character (v.3-4)		until he be taken out	
a. Rebellious, apostate	exalteth himself above		is removed
b. Man of lawlessness		8 And then shall that	
c. Son of perdition		Wicked be revealed,	
d. Adversary, opposer	so that he as God sit-	whom the Lord shall	breath or Word
to God	teth in the temple of		
e. Claims to be God	God, showing himself	spirit of his mouth,	
		and shall destroy with	
2. His danger: Is so	5 Remember ye not,	the brightness of his	Lord's glory
great it must be	that, when I was yet		
taught to the church	with you, I told you	9 Even him, whose	5. His work: To carry
		coming is after the	
3. His revelation to the	6 And now ye know	working of Satan with	all power & signs &
world: An historical	what withholdeth that	all power and signs	wonders of falsehood
appearance	he might be revealed	and lying wonders,	

Section II A GLIMPSE INTO THE END TIME 2 Thessalonians 1:6-2:17

Study 3: THE ANTICHRIST: THE MAN OF SIN

Text: 2 Thessalonians 2:4-9

Aim: To be warned: The antichrist is coming.

Memory Verse:

"And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming" (2 Thessalonians 2:8).

INTRODUCTION:

Are you familiar with the term *Trojan Horse*? You might recall that an army from another age was consistently repelled from the city that they were attacking. Finally, the attacking army decided to trick their foes by building a hollow wooden horse large enough to hold many soldiers. This Trojan horse looked like an innocent display on the outside. The curiosity of the leaders in the besieged city got the best of them. They sent a band of their men to pull the horse into the city gates. Unknowingly, there were enemy soldiers hidden inside the horse. After nightfall, the soldiers left the horse and captured the city.

In the same sense, the antichrist will come into this world in a Trojan horse. He will be trusted by many as he tricks the nations of the world. How will he do this? What will he be like? How should the Christian believer prepare for his coming? Answering these questions is the purpose of

this session.

There are many antichrists who have risen throughout history to carry on Satan's work (1 Jn.2:18). However, Paul is not speaking of these men who stand against Christ and His followers. By the terms "that man of sin" (lawlessness) and "the son of perdition" Paul means the most infamous antichrist who is to appear in the end time. The antichrist is to be revealed when the end time is near. He is to be Satan's instrument in the most severe way. How? By being filled with Satan's spirit (2 Th.2:9).

Paul did not identify the antichrist, and 1 Jn.2:18 speaks of many antichrists. These two facts are a warning to us, a warning to guard against hastily identifying some world leader as the anti-

The antichrist is most assuredly a person. The descriptions of this passage, as well as others, have to be terribly misconstrued to make them fit any force or system other than a person. Our Lord's words in Mk.3:14, where He uses the masculine participle, identify him as a person.

OUTLINE:

- 1. His character (v.4).
- 2. His danger: is so great it must be taught to the church (v.5).
- His revelation to the world: an historical appearance (v.6-8).
- 4. His end (v.8).
- His work: to carry on Satan's activity in all power and signs and wonders of falsehood (v.9).

1. HIS CHARACTER (v.4).

There are five traits of the antichrist revealed in this verse and in the former verse (v.3-4).

- The antichrist is the "man of sin" (v.3). He will be the very embodiment of sin and lawlessness, the man who idealizes sin, the man who is the ideal sinner. He will be the man who fulfills the dreams of Satan upon earth. He will lead the most widespread rebellion and revolt against God ever launched--a rebellion and revolt that will embrace practically every man, woman, and child.
- 2. The antichrist is the "son of perdition" (v.4). The word "perdition" means doom and destruction. Judas is said to be the son of perdition. But the meaning here is that the antichrist is the very embodiment of perdition...

he is the son of the most violent doom and destruction, the son of the most violent evil imaginable.

the son who is more deserving of doom and perdition than anyone else who has ever

the son of perdition, of the devil himself, the father of doom and destruction.

The antichrist is the opposer of all that is called God (v.4). The antichrist will be the opponent of Christ: this is the very meaning of his name. He will oppose Christ and everything Christ stands for: love, mercy, morality, and justice. Instead of these, he will lead the world to live a life of immorality, injustice, selfishness, and indulgence--especially in the treatment of those who profess the name of Christ.

The antichrist exalts himself above all others. The idea is against all others, in a hostile or antagonistic way. All peoples will either subject themselves to him or else suffer severe consequences. (Note: the picture is probably referring to imprisonment or death.) The point to see is

that he is totally...

- self-centered
- power-hungry
- fame-crazed
- authoritarian •
- immoral unjust
- dictatorial
- without values
- The antichrist claims to be God. Note exactly what is said here: he exalts himself above

all that is called God or that is worshipped.

The antichrist does not just attack authority, but he attacks all religions: "all that is called God or that is worshipped." How does he do this? He sits in the temple of God and shows himself or claims that he is God. The idea is that he sets himself up as the object of worship. He actually sets himself up within the temple of God to be worshipped. A.T. Robertson, a great Biblical scholar, points out some of the parallels between Christ and the antichrist:

⇒ both Christ and the antichrist are revealed.

- ⇒ both Christ and the antichrist are surrounded by many mysteries.
- ⇒ both Christ and the antichrist claim to be God.

APPLICATION:

The above description probably refers to the worship of a state religion which will focus upon the leader of the world, the antichrist. We have a perfect example in the worship of the emperor of the old Roman empire. Images of the emperor were placed in temples all around the world and the citizens were expected to worship the state. Remember what Rome had done. It had brought peace to a war-torn world. Because of this many people were willing to worship the ideal of the state. Think how some people worship science and technology today. And just imagine what would happen if a person arose upon the world scene who could either mobilize or force the nations of the world...

• to live at peace with each other.

 to solve the hunger problem by coordinating the growth and distribution of food for everyone in the world.

• to solve the problems of the world such as homelessness, unemployment, pov-

erty, lack of medical care, crime, and on and on.

Imagine how the vast majority of people would worship the person and state that could bring about this kind of utopian state for the peoples of the world. Natural man would gladly follow such a leader--his science and technology, his will and desire.

Think about this as well: What would be the best way for such a leader to control the masses of the world? The masses who had always been religious? Would it not be to create a new religion, a religion focused upon the ruler and the state over which he ruled? Would men not willingly worship the ruler--his government, science, and technology--

that had brought such a utopian existence upon earth for mankind?

This is exactly what happened in ancient Rome in the worship of the emperor and state. People were allowed to continue the worship of their own gods just so they acknowledged the supremacy of the emperor and the Roman state. They were to worship the state that had brought and maintained peace within the civilized world of that day. By encouraging (by law) the people to worship the emperor (the symbol of the state), the people were focused upon the government--upon the fact that the state had blessed the world with peace. (This worship of the state helped to maintain the peace throughout the Roman empire.)

QUESTIONS:

1. What does the antichrist's name literally mean? Why is this significant to the end times?

2. When you look at the five character traits of the antichrist revealed in Scripture, do you see any resemblance to men of your day? Are there really people out there who are that evil?

3. How does religion during the Roman empire compare with that of religions in your country today? What contrasts do you see? How should this impact Christians?

2. HIS DANGER: IS SO GREAT IT MUST BE TAUGHT TO THE CHURCH (v.5).

Paul had taught the Thessalonian believers all about the end time and the antichrist. The importance of the Lord's return, the day of the Lord, the great apostasy, and the rise of antichrist cannot be overstressed. Scripture declares emphatically that these events are going to happen:

⇒ The Lord is returning to gather His people together in the most spectacular and joy-

ful occasion of human history.

⇒ The great and terrible day of the Lord is going to fall upon the earth. Unbelieversall those who have cursed, rebelled, denied, ignored, neglected, and rejected Christare going to bear the justice of God.

⇒ The great apostasy is going to happen: millions are going to turn away from Christ.

⇒ The antichrist is going to arise upon the world scene and bring a material utopia to the earth and some form of state worship--all in utter rebellion and denial of God Himself.

The point is this: the end times are coming upon the world. Therefore, people must be taught so that some can be saved and escape the things coming upon the earth.

ILLUSTRATION:

When the *unsinkable* Titanic hit an iceberg in the early 1900's, there was great loss of life. Before the accident, there was an arrogant sense of security in the integrity of the ship. There was little time for evacuation instructions and drills. More time was spent on having a good time and arranging the deck chairs than preparing for an emergency.

When the ship began to sink, panic filled the hearts of the passengers. Compounding the tragedy, there were not enough life-boats for everyone. Consequently, hundreds drowned in the

freezing waters of the North Atlantic.

There are many who are sailing in dangerous waters today. Proper planning will spare many from God's judgment on the earth. As this world continues to sink into the abyss, the church is charged to reach the people of the earth for Christ. Failure to do so seals our destiny as a spiritual Titanic.

OUESTIONS:

1. If you were asked about the end times, where would you begin? Where would you go for more information and resources?

2. Why do people need to be taught about the antichrist?

3. What is the danger of not being prepared for the realities of the end times and the antichrist?

3. HIS REVELATION TO THE WORLD: AN HISTORICAL APPEARANCE (v.6-8).

Note the words "revealed in his time." The time is set: he is going to actually appear upon the world scene.

1. Right now, there is some power of restraint that holds back the antichrist and keeps him from appearing. However, the day is coming when the restraining power is to be "taken out of the way"; then the antichrist will be revealed to the world. Note that the restraining power is not identified. What or who is it? Even the best Bible scholars differ. But note three significant points.

a. The words used are "taken out of the way," not taken away. There is a vast difference: the power of restraint upon the antichrist can step aside and allow the antichrist to appear and still be at work in the world. If the power of restraint was completely removed and taken away, then there would be no power of good whatsoever in the world. Therefore, the words "taken out of the way" have to be noticed. Whatever the power of restraint is, it is still present in the world working for good. It only steps aside enough to allow the antichrist to appear and to carry on his work of evil.

b. The masculine pronoun "he" (v.7) and the neuter pronoun "what" (v.6) are both used for the restraining power. Therefore, the restraining power can be referred to as both a person and as the very embodiment of the power of good that works throughout the world. Note that the power is so strong that it controls the events of human history. That is, the restraining power can determine the exact day to step aside and let

the antichrist appear.

Logic has to be considered in determining who the restraining power is. When the identity is not given and there are so many varied opinions, we have to use the best

logic we can. In light of this, note the following:

⇒ What is the power that restrains evil upon the earth? The power of law? Laws change from society to society and from generation to generation. What is evil to one society is good to another. Many societies consider lying, stealing, cheating, and even murder to be good if it is for the purpose of forwarding the

state or government or leadership of a nation. (Compare Rome, Communism,

and many dictatorships.)

What then is the true power that restrains evil upon the earth? Is it not the power of God Himself? God's power and work against sin is the whole point of this passage. Therefore, it is difficult to see how the restraining power could be anything other than the Spirit of God upon the earth.

Note this as well: the Holy Spirit is referred to in both the masculine and neuter genders in Scripture (cp. Jn.14:16-17; 16:13). And He is pictured as the restraining force of evil in the Old Testament (Gen.6:3).

- 2. The "mystery of iniquity" (that is, lawlessness) is now at work in the world. This is a terrifying verse, for it says that the power that restrains evil is going to be removed--evil is going to be cut loose upon the world. God is going to remove much of the restraint that He now puts upon evil. Note the word "mystery": it means something that has been hidden but is now revealed. There is, of course, so much that we do not know about lawlessness:
 - ⇒ Why do we do things that we know are bad for us?
 ⇒ Why do we lie, steal, cheat, kill, curse and go to war?
 - ⇒ Why are we so selfish that we allow barriers and feelings to build up toward husband, wife, child, parent, neighbor, friend, employer, and employee--barriers and feelings that end up destroying our lives and relationships, hurting all those around us?
 - ⇒ Why do we indulge, hoard, bank, build, and then indulge, hoard, bank, and build more and more, neglecting the reality of a world that reels under the weight of desperate needs?

The questions could go on and on. We know better, yet we continue to do evil. Why? What is there about us that causes us to sin and then to continue on sinning when it is so bad and does so much harm? And why is it that we cannot control sin and lawlessness within ourselves, much less within our world? We cannot answer the question, not in and of ourselves. That is the mystery of iniquity. Sin is a mystery, an unknown factor of human life. However, there is Someone who does understand sin, and there is Someone who has revealed what it is and why we are enslaved by it. The Person is God. The mystery of iniquity has been revealed to men by God through Christ and His Holy Word. It is a matter of man listening to Christ and to the Word of God. But that is a discussion for another time.

The point is this: in the last days when it is time for the antichrist to arise, God is going to remove much of His restraint upon lawlessness. Lawlessness will be allowed to run rampant over the earth, and the rampage will be part of the judgment falling upon the earth. Men will be allowed to do their own thing and live as they desire to live. The day is coming when men will get

their wish and be left to themselves without God interfering.

ILLUSTRATION:

One day in the future, lawlessness will be allowed to run rampant, without moral direction. Contrast that day to a day years ago in the nation of Malaysia, where a cross-country race was held. Several hours after the starter's pistol was fired, none of the competitors had crossed the finish line. Fearing the worst, the race's officials got into their automobiles to search for the missing runners. Their fears were soon laid to rest. It turns out that the lead runner had taken a wrong turn and the rest of the pack had followed him for at least a ten-mile jaunt. All of the runners were sprinting in the wrong direction!

The world will one day find itself in the same situation. The Holy Spirit will step aside as the antichrist leads the lost into a race of lawlessness with absolutely no moral direction. Evil will become indescribable as it leaves morality behind in the dust. When the restraining power of God is removed from the earth, be careful whose lead you follow!

- 3. The antichrist will be revealed. He will "appear unveiled in all his naked deformity--no longer working secretly, but openly, and in an undisguised form; no longer the mystery, but the revelation of lawlessness." The spirit of sin and lawlessness will find its fulfillment in the antichrist and his government. He will vent the rage of men against God that has built up for centuries upon the world. He will arise upon the earth, and the terrible rage of lawlessness will be cut loose upon mankind. Men will suffer the results of their own sin. They will sin and sin and live lawless lives, burning in their lusts for more and more. But they will never be satisfied with what they have, nor with the good and the normal and the natural. They will have more than enough, but they will lust in their passions for more and more, bearing the terrible inner punishment of more and more...
 - dissatisfaction
 - emptiness
 - loneliness
 - unfulfillment
 - insecurity

- purposelessness
- disturbance
- conflict
- sorrow
- restlessness

On the surface, these things may not look all that bad, but think about them for a moment: imagine the depth and intensity of each inner punishment when God is not present to help us through it. The horror and fear, despair and insecurity that will be consuming the souls of men cannot be described, for men have never had to live without the presence of God upon the earth to help them.

"And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold" (Mt.24:10-12).

QUESTIONS:

1. Who is restraining evil in the world today?

2. Describe in a few words what this world will be like when men are left to themselves?

3. What will men do without the presence of God's Holy Spirit?

4. HIS END (v.8).

The Lord will make quick work of the antichrist; this is the point of this verse. The antichrist poses no threat to the Lord Himself. The power of the antichrist is as a drop of water in the ocean-as non-existent--in comparison to the power of the Lord. Note that the antichrist will be destroyed when Christ returns to earth.

1. The Lord Jesus will slay the antichrist with the spirit of His mouth (Greek "breath"). What is the spirit of Jesus' mouth? It is the spirit of truth, holiness, and unlimited power. When Jesus speaks, what He says is of God and unstoppable. When He rents the sky to slay the antichrist, there will be no battle, for all the forces of heaven and earth combined would be as non-existent against the Lord God of the universe. Christ will speak the Word and the antichrist will be slain. It will be like the blowing of a little breath and the dust particle is removed never to return.

Leon Morris says that the emphasis is "the ease with which the Lord will destroy the lawless

one, terrible though he will be."

The Pulpit Commentary says, "The words are to be taken literally as a description of the power and irresistible might of Christ at His coming-that the mere breath of His mouth is sufficient to consume the wicked."

"But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked" (Is.11:4).

2. The Lord of glory will destroy the antichrist with the brightness of His coming. The word brightness is a very special word. It is a word chosen by the New Testament to refer only to the coming of the Lord. It is used only five times in all the New Testament, and in every instance it refers to the Lord's coming into the world. It refers once to His first coming (2 Tim.1:10) and four times to His second coming (1 Tim.6:14; 2 Tim.4:1, 8; Tit.2:13). The whole idea of brightness is splendor, radiance, glory, and light. Someone has pointed out that when Jesus Christ returns to earth, there will be such a spectacular display of glory and splendor that the explosion of every star in the universe could not match the sight of the Lord (source unknown). When Christ first appears, there will apparently be the energizing of a beam of glory zeroed in on the antichrist, and he shall be immediately destroyed by the radiance of the Lord's glory and light--quicker than we could blink our eyes. Simply by showing Himself, the Lord will destroy the antichrist. Note: the word destroy does not mean to annihilate but to make inoperative; to make powerless; to end; to put a stop to his evil work.

OUESTIONS:

- 1. How would you compare the power of the antichrist with that of Jesus Christ?
- 2. What will be the fate of the antichrist?
- 3. What promise does this verse give to the believer?

5. HIS WORK: TO CARRY ON SATAN'S ACTIVITY IN ALL POWER AND SIGNS AND WONDERS OF FALSEHOOD (v.9).

Note that the coming of the antichrist will be after the working of Satan. This means...

- that he will be the very embodiment of Satan himself.
- that he will carry on all the lying power and signs and wonders of Satan.

• that he will carry out the very activity and work of Satan on earth.

The point to see is that Satan will have complete control over the life of the antichrist. He will be totally surrendered to Satan; Satan will be energizing him. He will be turning as many as he possibly can away from God. Teeming millions will be listening, watching, and following the antichrist and his government upon the earth. He will demonstrate the power and signs and wonders...

- to bring peace to earth.
- to adequately grow and distribute the food so that all may have adequate provision.
- to solve the problems of adequate health coverage, full employment, homelessness, energy crunches, and the other problems of this world.

What is wrong with this? Nothing. These are wonderful things and all these problems need to be addressed and solved. But the antichrist will not stop with this. He will claim supernatural power for himself and his state and its science. Because he has done so much for men, he will insist that religions and gods take a back seat to him and his government. He will institute the seat of empirical worship. He will do all he can to turn men away from God and lead them to worship him and his state.

The problem with these claims is the problem with all the claims of men: they go no further than the grave. Men die. No matter how much peace, food, clothing, shelter, and material possessions we are able to enjoy, it all ends. All the pleasures of this earth end, for we die. We are here only a few years and then we are gone. Therefore, the power, signs, and wonders of the antichrist can benefit a person only for the briefest of times. But not God--not the living and true God. He is interested in saving men eternally--forever and ever. This is the mammoth difference between the lies of Satan and the truth of Jesus Christ.

Note: there seems to be little if any difference between "power, signs and lying wonders." They seem to be only for emphatic stress: stressing the fact that Satan is going to be working all he can and in every way he can through the antichrist. There is no question, if a person could solve the problems such as peace, hunger, and unemployment, it would be miraculous. But again, note: if the person began to claim that he was God and to persecute others, then his works would prove to be lying powers and signs and wonders. Why? Because they are ever so temporary. His works still leave us in the grave. They do not and cannot impart eternal life to us.

"And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it" (Lk.4:6).

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring

lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pt.5:8).

ILLUSTRATION:

It was P.T. Barnam who once said "There's a sucker born every minute." His point is well taken, for mankind is prone to look for the quick-fix and is amused by the spectacular. Satan is the ultimate craftsman of illusion.

"Duveen, the famous English art connoisseur, took his little daughter to the beach one day, but she would not go into the chilly water. After persuasion failed, Duveen borrowed a tea-kettle, built a fire, heated a little water until it steamed beautifully; then, with a great flourish, he poured it into the ocean. His greatly impressed daughter went in without a murmur.

"Where can we find a better example of one of Satan's tricks? He dilutes an ocean of unbelief with a steaming teakettle of Christian ethics and people go wading in, self-

satisfied but unaware that they are bathing in unbelief."

By definition, a sucker is someone who is gullible and gets pulled into an unhealthy situation. A saint is pulled to the Cross, a place where deception is exposed and the truth is clear to see. Are you living like a sucker or like a saint?

OUESTIONS:

1. How can you discern between Satan's work and God's work, especially when something looks or sounds so good? What things do you need to be aware of that Satan does to you?

2. Why do you think many Christians do not take Satan's power seriously?

3. In what ways are man's solutions to life's problems only temporary and not eternal? What impact should this have on your everyday activities?

SUMMARY:

It is vital that you have a proper understanding of the antichrist's work in the end times. The better that you are informed, the more effective your warning will be to the lost. In review, you learned about...

1. His character.

His danger: is so great it must be taught to the church.
 His revelation to the world: an historical appearance.

4. His end.

5. His work: to carry on Satan's activity in all power and signs and wonders of falsehood.

PERSONAL JOURNAL NOTES: (Reflection & Response)

1. The most important thing that I learned from this lesson was:	
2. The area that I need to work on the most is:	
2. The drea that I need to work on the most is.	
3. I can apply this lesson to my life by:	
`	
4. Closing Statement of Commitment:	

A.T. Robertson. Word Pictures in the New Testament, Vol.4, p.50. Pulpit Commentary, Vol.21, p.25.

Leon Morris. The Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians. "Tyndale New Testament Commen-

taries," p.132.

Pulpit Commentary, Vol.21, p.25f.

Donald Grey Barnhouse. Let Me Illustrate. (Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell, 1967), p.280-281).

	D. The Antichrist's Followers, 2:10-12	God shall send them	ceived
	10 And with all de- ceivableness of un- righteousness in them	lie:	a. Because they do not believe the
2. They are the persons who do not believe	that perish; because	be damned who be- lieved not the truth, but had pleasure in	b. Because they take

Section II A GLIMPSE INTO THE END TIME 2 Thessalonians 1:6-2:17

Study 4: THE ANTICHRIST'S FOLLOWERS

Text: 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12

Aim: To recognize those who will follow the antichrist.

Memory Verse:

"And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved" (2 Thessalonians 2:10).

INTRODUCTION:

What kind of person would ever want to follow the antichrist? Think about it for a moment. To be a part of his group would make you an enemy of God and your path of life would end in total destruction. To be a follower of the antichrist would mean casting away all truth for a life of deceit. It would mean being a part of a group that would go down with its leader.

Years ago, thousands of people followed Adolph Hitler down a blind path. This German Nazi leader gathered a committed group of disciples who never blinked an eye as millions of Jews were exterminated. After the war's conclusion, many of Hitler's followers were convicted of war crimes. They either were imprisoned or executed for their participation in Hitler's agenda.

Men like Hitler have come and gone in the history of man. But there will come a day when one who is even more evil will come and deceive many. They will follow him blindly--to their own destruction.

This passage stands as a strong warning to all unbelievers. It reveals just who the followers of the antichrist will be. It shows who runs the risk of becoming a follower of the antichrist.

OUTLINE:

1. They are the perishing (v.10).

- 2. They are the persons who do not believe the truth (v.10).
- They are the deceived (v.11).They are the damned (v.12).

1. THEY ARE THE PERISHING (v.10).

Note the continuous action: those "that perish," that is, the persons who are in the process of perishing. Even while a follower of the antichrist lives on the earth, he is perishing. He is on the road to being lost. He has turned away from God and is traveling in the opposite direction along the road that leads to damnation. The word perishing means to be lost, to be in the process of be-

ing destroyed, ruined, corrupted and put to death. The thing to note is this: when a person is on the road to perdition, he has turned away from God and is pointed in the opposite direction. He is traveling away from God. He has deliberately separated himself from God and has severed all ties with God.

Therefore, he cannot see God nor the things of God. His face and eyes are not turned toward the gospel, but toward the world that perishes. The gospel is hid to him because he is perishing, because he is traveling the road of the lost, the road of those who are perishing. He is simply facing in the wrong direction, looking away from the gospel.

"I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Lk.13:3).

Note why the followers of the antichrist will be perishing: they will be deceived by the antichrist. He will deceive them to live unrighteous lives--lives that are not right before God. And note: he will use all kinds and forms of deceit to secure the loyalty of people:

⇒ He will lead people away from the truth.
 ⇒ He will mistreat people by lying to them.

⇒ He will lead people to believe false ideas and untruths.

⇒ He will exalt man, government, and science.

⇒ He will cheat people out of the inheritance they could receive.

⇒ He will misguide people and keep them from knowing true inner peace, assurance, security, love, joy, and confidence--all the qualities that build the very best lives.

OUESTIONS:

1. How is perishing defined? Ultimately, whose fault is it that we perish--man's or God's? Why?

2. Why will the followers of the antichrist perish?

3. What traits of deception are used on men today? What do you need to do in order to strengthen yourself from these deceptions?

2. THEY ARE THE PERSONS WHO DO NOT BELIEVE THE TRUTH (v.10).

The word *received* means to welcome. Note what it is that they *do not* welcome: the truth, the love of the truth. By truth is meant the truth of the gospel. They do not welcome or love the gospel. What a terrible indictment against the followers of the antichrist. They reject the love of God. God has provided...

the way for them to be saved.

• the way for them to escape death.

• the way for them to live eternally.

the way for them to live victoriously over the trials and sufferings of this life.

But despite all this, they do not love the truth of the gospel. And the result is terrible: they are not saved. The followers of the antichrist will be those who have not welcomed the love of the truth--those who have rejected the love of the gospel.

"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (Jn.3:19).

ILLUSTRATION:

It is a very dangerous thing to ignore the truth. Time and again, men plow ahead to do what they want to do. Listen to this very graphic example of men who ignored the truth.

"Many years ago, when the Egyptian troops first conquered Nubia, a regiment was crossing a desert. The heat was oppressive, almost beyond endurance; the supply of

water nearly exhausted. Far in the horizon they seemed to see a beautiful lake bordered

with palm-trees.

"The Arab guide, who well understood the desert wastes, told the soldiers there was no lake there, that what they saw was only a mirage, a floating delusion on the sky. But the thirsty soldiers saw something which they believed to be water, and were determined to trust their sight rather than his words. They insisted upon their guide leading them to the water.

"He protested, and resisted even to death. When they had killed him, the whole regiment, wild with excitement and eager for the cooling waters, left the course indicated by their guide and started for the lake. On and on they pressed over the burning sands; hour after hour they endured the heat, hoping to gain the refreshing waters of the lake, but that object fled before them like a phantom. Self-deceived, exhausted by the heat, and overcome with fatigue, they began to fall upon the burning sands and die. They all perished.

"Long after, the Arabs in search found the body of the guide, a martyr to his faithfulness, while the bodies of the soldiers were found far out upon the wild wastes, where they fell in their vain search to find water where there was none. Their sincerity did not

save them from death" (as told by Sir S.W. Baker).

The followers of the antichrist might be sincere, but because of their rejection of the truth, they will be sincerely wrong, paying the ultimate price for their rejection.

OUESTIONS:

1. How and why does a follower of the antichrist reject God's truth?

2. What does this verse teach you about making responsible decisions?3. Do the benefits of rejecting the gospel outweigh the punishments of rejecting it? Why or why not?

3. THEY ARE THE DECEIVED (v.11).

There are always two factors involved in deception:

⇒ the deceit of the deceiver.

 \Rightarrow the willingness of the person to reject the truth and to believe a lie.

Note verse ten above and both factors are clearly seen. Now note what this verse says: "For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie." Does this mean that God misleads unbelievers? That God deceives people? No! A person is not deceived...

apart from his own will.

against his will.

A person is deceived only because he chooses to disbelieve God and His Word. What Scripture teaches is that God has set certain laws in the universe...

• laws both within man and within nature.

• laws which go into motion and take effect when man acts.

If a person does something, certain things will happen. If a person does something else, then something else will happen. Scripture teaches that unbelief is governed by these laws. For example...

• there is the law of sowing and reaping. If a person sows unbelief and deception, he

shall reap unbelief and deception.

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Gal.6:7-8).

there is the law of measure. If a person measures unbelief and deception, unbelief and deception shall be measured back to him. That is, if a person lives a life of unbelief and deception, denying God, then unbelief and deception will grow more and more in his heart and life.

> "For with what judgment ve judge, ve shall be judged: and with what measure ve mete, it shall be measured to you again" (Mt.7:2).

The point is this: it is because people reject the truth of the gospel that they shall suffer strong delusion and believe the lie of the antichrist. Note the words "strong delusion." The words mean a working of error. In the end time, people will work error after error, sin after sin, evil after evil. They will become stronger and stronger in their sin, harder and harder. They will become steeped in their rejection of the gospel more and more.

Leon Morris says, "It is the law of life that those who take this step [disbelieve the gospel] go further and further astray into error....Men who reject the truth are bound to end by accepting evil

as true. Thereby God uses Satan as the means of punishing them.

In the simplest of words, A.T. Robertson says, "[God] gives the wicked over to the evil which they have deliberately chosen (Ro.1:24, 26, 28)."

"But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" (Mt.6:23).

APPLICATION:

What a warning to men! The followers of the antichrist will be those who are deceived about the gospel-the persons who do not believe nor love the truth of the gospel. And the great tragedy is that a person cannot reject Jesus Christ and expect things to stay as they are. God loves His Son too much to overlook His being rejected. Jesus Christ has done too much for man for God to bypass a person's unbelief and rejection. When a person has the chance to see the gospel and open his heart but chooses not to look and closes his heart, that person suffers the consequences. He suffers more and more unbelief and deception; he becomes stronger and stronger in his rejection. believing more and more in the lie. The unbeliever is the prime target of the antichrist; it is the unbelievers who will become his followers.

OUESTIONS:

1. Is it possible for only one person to be involved in deception? Why or why not?

2. What valid excuse is there for not accepting or believing the truth of the gospel?

3. What is the relationship between knowing what to do as opposed to doing what you know? Can you explain why some can hear the gospel but refuse to receive it?

4. Who is the prime target of the antichrist? Why would he want to select them to be his followers?

4. THEY ARE THE DAMNED (v.12).

The word damned means judged, condemned, punished. There are two reasons why the fol-

lowers of the antichrist will be judged.

They will not believe the truth of the gospel, the truth of the Lord Jesus Christ. God loves His Son Jesus Christ--loves Him with a perfect love. Therefore, a man cannot expect God to overlook him when he... dishonors Christ

curses Christ

opposes Christ disobeys Christ despises Christ neglects Christ

rejects Christ

ignores Christ downgrades Christ demeans Christ

scoffs at Christ

debases Christ

Jesus Christ is the Sovereign Son of God who has sacrificially died for men. Therefore, if a person rejects the sacrificial death of Christ, he cannot expect God to overlook the dishonor done to His Son. The person can only expect the judgment of God. Remember: antichrist means anti, that is, against Christ. Any person who follows any of the antichrists now or the infamous antichrist in the future will be judged, condemned and punished by God. God could do nothing else.

2. They will have pleasure in unrighteousness. They will be people who live unrighteous

lives and take pleasure in their unrighteousness. They will be people who love their sins.

a. They will lust with their eyes and love to feed their imaginations with what they look at.

⇒ They will be people who look and lust after pornographic literature.

⇒ They will be people who look and lust after those who dress to expose their bodies and attract attention.

⇒ They will be people who look and lust after enticing food.

- They will be people who look and lust after the possessions of the world.
- b. They will lust with their flesh and love to feed their flesh with what they lust after.

 They will be people who lust and feed their flesh with all forms of immor-

⇒ They will be people who lust and feed their flesh with all kinds of food.

⇒ They will be people who lust and feed their flesh with all kinds of possessions, indulging every desire and knowing little about sacrifice in order to meet the needs of the lost in the world.

They will seek the pride of life, position, recognition, honor, power, fame, and wealth. They will focus more and more upon self and the power of man and science

to give them the utopia of happiness and success.

Note the awful tragedy of all this: man is the total focus--his pleasure, desires, ambitions, image, ego, esteem. God is forgotten altogether. Man loves himself and focuses upon himself alone. God is rejected, denied, forgotten, ignored, and neglected. God is relegated to nothing more than a figment of the imagination of some superstitious people. Therefore the judgment, condemnation, and punishment of God shall fall upon those who love their unrighteousness (sin).

"For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them" (Ro.1:26-32).

ILLUSTRATION:

Without a relationship with God, man is like a fish out of water. Listen to this peculiar story.

"Some scientists, according to a story by Harold Bredesen, decided to develop a fish that could live outside of water. So, selecting some healthy red herring, they

bred and crossbred, hormoned and chromosomed until they produced a fish that could exist out of water.

"But the project director wasn't satisfied. He suspected that though the fish had

learned to live on dry land, it still had a secret desire for water.

"'Re-educate it,' he said. 'Change its very desires.'

"So again they went to work, this time retraining even the strongest reflexes. The result? A fish that would rather die than get wet. Even humidity filled this new fish with dread.

"The director, proud of his triumph, took the fish on tour. Well, quite accidentally, according to official reports, it happened-the fish fell into a lake. It sank to the bottom, eyes and gills clamped shut, afraid to move, lest it become wetter. And of course it dared not breathe; every instinct said no. Yet breathe it must.

"So the fish drew a tentative gill-full. Its eyes bulged. It breathed again and flicked a fin. It breathed a third time and wriggled with delight. Then it darted

away. The fish had discovered water.

"And with that same wonder, men and women conditioned by a world that rejects God, discover him. For in him we live and move and have our being."

If you've never committed your life to Christ, you are like a fish out of water. Trust Him...jump in and swim!

OUESTIONS:

1. Why will the followers of the antichrist be judged?

2. If these followers do not love God, then who or what do they love?

3. What traits of the followers of the antichrist do you see in your community or society? What steps have you taken to protect yourself from acquiring these traits?

4. If someone has embraced these fallen traits, what will be their eternal outcome? Do you think that these kind of people are beyond God's saving hand?

SUMMARY:

You have just studied a very strong warning directed to the unbeliever. Your heart should now be convicted to share the gospel with unbelievers. For if they reject God and follow the anti-christ...

1. They are the perishing.

2. They are the persons who do not believe the truth.

They are the deceived.They are the damned.

May God give you the grace to speak His Word clearly--for His sake and for theirs.

PERSONAL JOURNAL NOTES: (Reflection & Response)

1. The most important thing that I learned from this lesson was:

2. The area that I need to work on the most is:

3. I can apply this lesson to my life by:	
4. Closing Statement of Commitment:	
Elon Foster, Editor. 6,000 Classic Sermon The Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians Word Pictures in the New Testament, Vo. Craig B. Larson, Editor. Illustrations for	". "Tyndale New Testament Commentaries," p.134.

	E. The Salvation of God's Followers, 2:13-17	sus Christ. 15 Therefore, breth- ren, stand fast, and hold the traditions	tion: To stand fast &
		which ye have been	
		taught, whether by	
	to God for you, breth-		
		16 Now our Lord Je-	
2. The origin of salvation:			
God has chosen believers	hath from the begin-	God, even our Father,	
a. From the beginning	ning chosen you to	which hath loved us,	a. God's love
b. Through sanctifi-	salvation through sanc-	and hath given us ev-	b. Eternal encour-
	tification of the Spir-	erlasting consolation	agement
c. Through belief of	it and belief of the	and good hope through	c. A good hope
the gospel	truth:	grace,	
		17 Comfort your hearts,	
vation: To gain the	you by our gospel, to	and stablish you in	e. Strength
glory of Christ		every good word and	
	glory of our Lord Je-	work.	

Section II A GLIMPSE INTO THE END TIME 2 Thessalonians 1:6-2:17

THE SALVATION OF GOD'S FOLLOWERS Study 5:

Text: 2 Thessalonians 2:13-17

Aim: To gain the assurance and comfort of God's salvation.

Memory Verse:

"But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (2 Thessalonians 2:13).

INTRODUCTION:

Have you ever had to wait in line in traffic, at the bank, or at the grocery store? Which line do you get into? The personal challenge is to make the best guess on which line will move the auickest.

If you guess wrongly, you might get impatient and disgruntled. But if you picked the quickest. line, a feeling of great relief and satisfaction fills your mind-as you look at all the people who are still waiting.

Fortunately, when it comes to life, there is no guess-work about which line to choose. God picked the right line for you to stand in-the redemptive line of salvation, the line of eternal life which is rooted in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

This passage is a contrast between the followers of the antichrist and the followers of Christ. It is the followers of Christ who have chosen the line of life. Thus, this is a passage that should speak with force to the heart of the believer.

OUTLINE:

1. The contrast: believers are saved, not damned like the followers of antichrist (v.13).

2. The origin of salvation: God has chosen believers (v.13).

3. The purpose of salvation: to gain the glory of Christ (v.14).

4. The duty of salvation: to stand fast and to cling to the Word (v.15).

5. The fruits of salvation (v.16-17).

1. THE CONTRAST: BELIEVERS ARE SAVED, NOT DAMNED LIKE THE FOLLOW-ERS OF ANTICHRIST (v.13).

Note the word but. It is a sharp contrast between the followers of the antichrist and the followers of the Lord. The followers of the antichrist are to be damned, that is, judged, condemned, and punished. But the followers of the Lord are the beloved of the Lord. Why? Because they follow Him. They believe Him, all that He claimed: that He is truly the Son of God who has come to earth...

• to die for men.

• to save men from death and judgment.

• to give men eternal life.

• to bring assurance, love, joy, and peace to men as they walk throughout life.

Therefore, believers love the Lord with all their hearts, and they follow Him ever so diligently, doing all they can to please Him. The Lord is bound to count a person who so loves and follows Him as one of His beloved followers. The Lord is bound to save any person who truly believes Him. The point is this: believers are not to be damned like the followers of antichrist, but saved. The great truth of salvation is the discussion of this passage.

ILLUSTRATION:

As American involvement in the Vietnam war came to an end, the city of Saigon was the last line of a faltering defense. In the final hours before Saigon fell into the hands of the enemy, panic

was rampant throughout the city-especially at the American Embassy and the airport.

Vietnamese who had been loyal to the Americans were scampering for some way to escape the country. They knew that if they were left behind, they would be lost. As the aggressive enemy troops continued to push into the city, the anxiety level intensified. Soon, there were no more flights leaving the airport.

According to official reports, there were a lot of people left behind after the last plane was out of harm's way. Those who caught the last flight out made sure that their affairs were in order. All of their paperwork was current and their tickets reserved a place for them. For those who were

left behind, all hope was lost. The last plane out was gone--without them.

Will you be on the last plane out? Or because of your rejection of Christ, will you be left behind?

OUESTIONS:

1. Do you ever experience feelings of deep gratitude to Christ for saving you? What should these feelings prompt you to do?

2. What sort of attitude are you to have toward God for saving you?

3. How should your life reflect your gratitude?

2. THE ORIGIN OF SALVATION: GOD HAS CHOSEN BELIEVERS (v.13).

This is a most wonderful truth. God has chosen believers before the world was ever created, chosen them to salvation. God wants us to be with Him. God does not want us to be judged and condemned and separated from Him. God wants us to live with Him forever and ever.

"For thou art a holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people" (Dt.7:6-7).

The point is this: God has chosen believers in the very same sense in which He chose Israel. Believers are as chosen by God as Israel was. God loves us from the depths of His heart, and He wants us to be secure in the fact that He has chosen us. Our salvation is secure because it is based

upon His having chosen us.

God has chosen believers to be saved "from the beginning," that is, before the foundation of the world. This is a most glorious truth: God saw us as saved before we were ever born. He chose us to be saved before He ever created the world. Just think of the security in this. If God saw us as saved before the earth was made--if God saw us saved before we were ever born, then there is no way we can be lost and removed from His love and care. This is what Jesus meant when He said:

"And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand" (Jn.10:28-29).

What security! Having been chosen by God to salvation--chosen from the beginning, from eternity past-before the earth was ever established. There is no judgment or condemnation for the believer; the believer will not be judged and condemned with the followers of the antichrist nor with any other unbelievers.

"He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love" (Eph.1:4).

Note a most crucial point: in the Bible the truth of God's choice (election and predestination) is not so much a statement of theology or philosophy--it is more a message that speaks to the spiritual experience of the believer. If the pure logic of philosophy and theology is applied, then God's choice says that God chooses some for heaven and others for a terrible hell. But this is simply not what God means in the passages dealing with His choice, and this fact needs to be given close attention by all ministers. What God wants believers to do is to take heart, for He has assured their salvation and given them the greatest security imaginable. This is what He means by His having chosen us to salvation. The next two points show how salvation takes place, both God's part and man's part.

God has chosen believers "through sanctification of the Spirit." The word sanctification 2. means to set apart or be separated unto God. A man is a dead spirit; therefore, he can do nothing spiritually just as a dead body can do nothing physically. The natural man prefers self and sin; therefore, if a man with a dead spirit is to come to Christ, he has to be acted upon and drawn by God. Both God's Spirit and man have a part in salvation. The part of God's Spirit is to move upon the heart of a man and stir him to set apart his life unto God. How does the Spirit of God do this?

The Holy Spirit quickens the gospel to a man's mind so that he sees it as never before. He sees, understands, grasps as never before that "the Father...hath sent" Christ

to feed and nourish man (to save and to give him life).

"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (Jn.3:3).

"Put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the

image of him that created him" (Col.3:10).

b. The Holy Spirit convicts a man of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, that is, of his need to be fed and nourished (saved and given life).

"And when he [the Holy Spirit] is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (Jn.16:8).

c. The Holy Spirit attracts men to the cross of Christ through its glorious provisions.

"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day" (Jn.6:44).

d. The Holy Spirit stirs a man to respond by coming to Christ.

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev.22:17).

3. God has chosen believers through "belief of the truth," that is, through believing the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

⇒ The Lord Jesus Christ has died for believers: taken their sins upon Himself and suffered the penalty, judgment, condemnation, and punishment of their sins. He has sacrificed and substituted His life for them.

⇒ The Lord Jesus Christ has risen from the dead for believers: conquered death and as-

cended into heaven for them.

The believers of the world believe the gospel with all their hearts: believe they will never have to die because Jesus Christ died for them--believe they shall ascend into heaven to live eternally with the Father and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. They believe and have entrusted their lives to

this glorious truth.

The point is this: when a person really believes the truth of the gospel, God saves him. This is man's part in salvation. No person has ever been saved who did not believe the truth of the gospel. And no person who has rejected the gospel is lost because God has not chosen him. The person is lost because he rejected Christ. God will choose any person who will accept Christ. This is His Word; it is the promise of His Word. God will not force us to believe nor will He keep us from believing. The choice is every person's choice. No person is forced to receive or to reject Christ. Every person is responsible for his own decision.

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Ro.10:9-10).

OUESTIONS:

1. What motivated God to choose you to be a son or daughter of His?

2. Does God have the right to choose whom He wishes to be His child? Why or why not?

3. How would you define "sanctification"? In what practical ways does this process work in your life?

4. What are some of the ways the Holy Spirit moves within your heart?

3. THE PURPOSE OF SALVATION: TO GAIN THE GLORY OF CHRIST (v.14).

Remember: the Thessalonian believers were suffering severe persecution. Think what this verse meant to them. They were bound for glory-to obtain and share in the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. The word *glory* means to possess perfect light and to be full of perfect light; to dwell in the perfect light, brilliance, splendor, brightness, luster, and magnificence of God.

⇒ The believer shall be glorified with Christ as an heir of God.

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and jointheirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" (Ro.8:16-17).

⇒ The believer shall be glorified by being given a body just like the body of Christ.

"Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself" (Ph.3:21).

⇒ The believer shall be glorified with Christ by appearing in the glory of heaven.

"When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory" (Col.3:4).

⇒ The believer shall be glorified with Christ by receiving a glorious nature just like the nature of Christ.

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Ro.8:18).

⇒ The believer shall be glorified with Christ by receiving an eternal weight of glory.

"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor.4:17).

⇒ The believer shall be glorified with Christ by receiving a salvation that involves eternal glory.

"Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" (2 Tim.2:10).

⇒ The believer shall be glorified with Christ by becoming a partaker of all the glory that shall be revealed.

"The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed" (I Pt.5:1).

⇒ The believer shall be glorified with Christ by receiving the light of the glory of God, and he shall reign with Him for ever and ever.

"And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev.22:5).

OUESTIONS:

1. In practical terms, what does it mean to gain the glory of Christ?

- 2. What does this verse teach you about the purpose of salvation? What role did you play in your own salvation?
- 3. Contrast the glory of Christ with the glory offered by this world. What would cause some to settle for this world's glory? How do you resist these temptations?

4. THE DUTY OF SALVATION: TO STAND FAST AND CLING TO THE WORD (v.15).

Note the word *traditions*. It means all the Word of God whether it is taught or written. Leon Morris says:

"This is another way of putting the truth...that the gospel is not of human origin, and the preacher is not at liberty to substitute his own thoughts for that which he has received."

We are to stand fast and cling to the Word of God. We are not to buckle under to the world and its enticements. We are not to cave in as the followers of the antichrist will do. We are to stand fast and cling to the Word of God no matter the inducement and the opposition.

"As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love" (Jn.15:9).

"But cleave unto the LORD your God, as ye have done unto this day" (Josh.23:8).

APPLICATION:

What would you be willing to do for a million dollars? That question was posed to an average group of people. Their answers were confidential and so they were able to freely respond. Some of the questions were: For a million dollars, would you be willing to...

cheat on your spouse?

rob a bank?

kill someone?

For some Christians, a million dollars would entice them to consider doing the *unthinkable*. For a lot less, many are willing to water down the gospel. When times get difficult, to what do you cling?

OUESTIONS:

1. Do you stand fast and cling to the Word of God as you walk about day by day? What can you do to strengthen your commitment to Christ and to the Word of God?

2. In what circumstances would you consider doing the unthinkable? Who keeps you accountable to live by God's Word?

3. Why is it important for Christian believers to cling to God's Word?

5. THE FRUITS OF SALVATION (v.16-17).

The fruits of salvation are fivefold.

1. The person who is saved receives the love of God and of Christ (see 1 Th.3:12).

2. The person who is saved receives eternal consolation. The phrase means eternal encouragement, comfort, and strength. It is a consolation and strength that cannot be shaken by anything-no matter what it is--either now or in eternity.

3. The person who is saved receives good hope. What greater hope could the believer have than to live in glory with the Lord God forever and ever (see 2 Th.2:14)? Note: our hope is given us through the grace of God and through His grace alone.

"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (Jn.14:2-3).

4. The person who is saved receives comfort. The word means exhortation, encouragement, admonition, comfort. Note that God and Christ are the Ones who can comfort, exhort, and encourage the believer to live like he should. When the believer comes to Christ for strength, Christ will

comfort and encourage him.

5. The person who is saved is stablished in every good word and work. The word stablish means to strengthen, secure, make stable, set fast, and make firm. The one thing men long for is to be secure, strong, and firmly established in life. God is able to fulfill this longing. God is able to establish and strengthen man and to give him a strong life.

ILLUSTRATION:

The secret to your salvation is in your Savior. In Christ, you find every resource for salvation. This truth was captured during a hurricane in the Gulf of Mexico.

"A news report highlighted a rescue device used on the oil rigs. In case of fire or (in this case) hurricane, rig workers scramble into the bullet shaped 'bus' and strap themselves into their seats. When the entry port is shut, the vehicle is released down a chute and projected away from the rig. The seat belts protect the occupants from the impact with the water. The capsule then bobs in the sea until the rescuers come to pick it up.

"The device parallels the theological truth of Romans 8:1-- Therefore, there is

now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

"Justification does not mean our world always stops falling apart. The rig still may topple in the hurricane. But those in the right place, whether a rescue module or spiritually in Christ, are saved from the ultimate consequences of the storm. The storm will take its course. The welfare of the workers depends on whether they are in the rescue device."

OUESTIONS:

1. Are you enjoying the fruits of salvation, or do you still try to get by on your own strength?

2. Can your good works add to the fruits of salvation?

3. Does your lifestyle display the fruits of salvation to non-believers? Can you improve in any of these areas?

SUMMARY:

The next time you pick the wrong line of traffic, whether it be in your car, at the store, or in the bank, capture the moment. If you have trusted Christ, rejoice, for God has placed you in the line that really matters the most-the line of redemption. Treasure these points in your heart...

1. The contrast: believers are saved, not damned like the followers of the antichrist.

The origin of salvation: God has chosen believers.
 The purpose of salvation: To gain the glory of Chr

The purpose of salvation: To gain the glory of Christ.The duty of salvation: To stand fast and to cling to the Word.

5. The fruits of salvation.

PERSONAL (Reflec	L JOURNAL NOTES: tion & Response)
1. The most important thing that I learned fi	rom this lesson was:
2. The area that I need to work on the most	is:
3. I can apply this lesson to my life by:	
4. Closing Statement of Commitment:	

The Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians. "Tyndale New Testament Commentaries," p.138. Craig B. Larson, Editor. Illustrations for Preaching & Teaching, p.213.

	III.FINAL WORDS,	reasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.	c. Pray—because all men do not believe
	3:1-18	3 But the Lord is faithful, who shall	
		stablish you, and keep	a. God strengthens &
	A. Prayer & The	you from evil.	keeps him from evil
	Lord's Faithful-	4 And we have confi-	b. God motivates him
	ness, 3:1-5	dence in the Lord	
		touching you, that ye	
1. The request for	F inally, brethren, pray	both do and will do	1) To love God & to
prayer		the things which we	
a. Pray that the Word	the Lord may have	command you.	2) To endure
has free course		5 And the Lord direct	
		your hearts into the	Lord
		love of God, and into	
b. Pray that believers	2 And that we may		
be delivered from	be delivered from un-	Christ.	

Section III FINAL WORDS 2 Thessalonians 3:1-18

Study 1: PRAYER AND THE LORD'S FAITHFULNESS

Text: 2 Thessalonians 3:1-5

Aim: To focus upon two essentials for Christian growth: Prayer and the Lord's faithfulness.

Memory Verse:

"But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil" (2 Thessalonians 3:3).

INTRODUCTION:

Picture yourself serving the Lord on a foreign mission field. You find yourself constantly in trouble with the rulers of the country. All around you are fanatics whose life-style is hypocritical,

repulsive, and downright pagan. You need help and you need it soon!

You have been given the chance to make one phone call to some close friends. Your time on the phone is limited to sixty seconds. What would you request from your friends? An immediate rescue? A transfer to another location? Personal relief in the way of supplies or a substitute? These are not bad suggestions, but these were not Paul's choices to the Thessalonians. Writing from the carnal city of Corinth, his burden focused on two items: prayer for successful ministry in Corinth and a helpful reminder that the Lord was faithful and in control.

The main section of the letter of Second Thessalonians has been completed. This passage begins the final words ever written to the church by Paul so far as we know. In the final words, two

subjects jump to the forefront immediately: prayer and the Lord's faithfulness.

OUTLINE:

1. The request for prayer (v.1-2).

2. The Lord's faithfulness to the believer (v.3-5).

1. THE REQUEST FOR PRAYER (v.1-2).

The believers at Thessalonica were suffering severe persecution and all kinds of trouble. This was one of the reasons Paul was writing to the church: to comfort and encourage them to continue

on for Christ. But remember: Paul was in Corinth and he too was suffering all kinds of trouble, including persecution. He needed the presence and power of the Lord as much as anyone. As John Walvoord says:

"Paul, too, was having his difficulties. The task committed to Paul was a very lonely one: to go from place to place, frequently coming into a strange city where not one person would welcome him. He was not entertained in the best hotel, nor was there any honorarium for him in recognition of his services. He had to find his own way, arrange for his public meetings, and somehow try to bear a testimony for Christ. Apart from fellowship with the Lord, it was a very difficult and solitary task and one in which there were many discouragements."

The specific trouble at Corinth was persecution. The Jewish religionists attacked Paul and dragged him before the civil authorities. However, the case was dismissed because it was a religious matter. Paul was allowed to continue his preaching mission, but apparently the Jewish religionists continued their opposition, stirring up whatever trouble they could (cp. Acts 18:1-18 for the full story).

The point is this: Paul needed prayer; he needed believers everywhere praying for him. But

note what it was he requested. He did not ask prayer...

for comfort

• for personal needs

• for God to take him away from Corinth and to open up a new ministry elsewhere

Paul's focus was not selfish--not at all. His whole focus was upon the spread and success of the gospel. He wanted prayer for two things.

1. There was the need for the Word to have free course and to be glorified. The Word of God is often hindered, hampered, and stymied. Too often, it has no power or influence among a people. Why?

opposition

unprepared hearts

sleepy-eyed listeners

daydreaming minds

unprepared and carnal preachers and teachers

The list could go on and on, but the great need of the hour is for the Word of God to have free course and be glorified in the pulpits, pews, classrooms, homes, streets, and cities of this nation and world.

Free course means to run. It is the picture of an Olympian athlete running in a race, the picture of the Word of God spreading all over because it is...

focused

unflinching

active

vigorous

strong

powerful

urgent

If the Word of God had free course, it would be glorified; that is, souls would be saved and lives changed. People would be freed...

from sin and its enslavement

from guilty consciences

• from immoral and evil behavior

• from unjust treatment

• from ignorance

from worldliness

People would no longer experience emptiness, loneliness, purposelessness, or lostness. They would be set free to know the Lord and to commit their lives to reaching and meeting the needs of a world full of desperate people. Note: this is exactly what had happened to the Thessalonian believers. The Word of God had freely run among the Thessalonians; therefore, many had been converted to the Lord (cp. 1 Th.1:5; 2:1, 13).

"And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed" (Acts 13:48).

"He sendeth forth his commandment upon earth: his word runneth

very swiftly" (Ps.147:15).

APPLICATION:

Believers should always be praying for the ministers and teachers of the gospel--that the Word of God might have a free course as it is preached and taught. And they should pray every day for every preacher and teacher they know. Think for a moment: What would happen if the believers of a single church prayed often every day for their minister and teachers? One thing is known: God could not sit still, for He would know that those believers were as sincere and genuine as they could be. He would know that they desperately wanted to reach their community for Christ.

ILLUSTRATION:

Many churches have books about prayer in their library. Classes are taught and sermons are preached every week about why we should pray. But in the final analysis, does anyone take prayer seriously enough to pray?

"Five ministerial students were visiting in London on a hot Sunday in July. While they were waiting for the doors [of the church] to open, a man approached and asked, 'Gentlemen, would you like to see the heating apparatus of the church?' They thought, 'How queer he is to want to show us the heating system on a hot day in July!'

"Following him, they came to a door. He quietly opened it and whispered: 'There, sirs, is our heating apparatus!' Some seven hundred intercessors were kneeling in prayer, seeking an outpouring of God's Spirit upon the service which was soon to begin in the Tabernacle. That unknown guide was [Charles] Spurgeon

[the great pastor of the pulpit] himself!"2

What is fueling the fire in your church's furnace--a powerless program or a praying people?

2. There was the need for believers to be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men. Again, remember Paul's situation, how he was being attacked in Corinth. He knew what it was like to be opposed by wicked people who would not listen to reason.

Ministers, teachers, and believers alike are sometimes opposed and attacked by unreasonable and wicked people. Think how unreasonable the attacks are. Why would people want to oppose

and attack a person who preaches and teaches...

love • discipline
io joy • brotherhood

peacemoralitysalvationeternal life

Why would people want to attack a person who preaches and teaches that God loves the world-that He has provided the way for man to escape death and to live forever? A reasonable and honest person would never oppose or attack a person who was preaching and teaching this message. But note: not all people are reasonable and good. As Scripture says, all persons do not have faith (v.2). In fact, the world is full of unreasonable and wicked persons, persons who want to live like they want without any interference from God. They deny and ignore God--deny and ignore the evidence within the world and within their hearts and thoughts that God exists, that His love and judgments are real. Therefore, they oppose anything that reminds them of eternity, of a coming day of judgment. They want nothing to do with a message that puts restrictions upon their behavior, especially a message that demands so much love--a love that demands that we give all we are and have to meet the needs of the dying and poor masses of the world.

Believers, ministers and laymen alike, need to be delivered from such unreasonable and wicked persons. When people lack reason and morality, goodness and honesty, conscience and decency, they are dangerous. They can hinder both the messenger and the message of the gospel. Therefore, believers need to be constantly praying for God to deliver His people from unreasonable and wicked persons.

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; and for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak" (Eph.6:18-20).

OUESTIONS:

1. Why did Paul specifically request prayer in his time of need? What lessons can you glean from what Paul prayed?

2. If the Word of God had free course in your community, what changes do you think would take place?

2. THE LORD'S FAITHFULNESS TO THE BELIEVER (v.3-5).

The Lord Jesus Christ is faithful. Believers may fail us: when we stand in the greatest need, when people oppose and persecute us, when the most terrible trials confront us--believers may fail...

- to pray
- to encourage
- to support
- to speak kindly
- to help

But not the Lord. The Lord God is faithful. He will do things for the believer.

- 1. The Lord will establish the believer and keep him from evil.
 - ⇒ The word *establish* means to strengthen, secure, make stable or firm, and set fast.
 - ⇒ The word keep means to guard.
 - \Rightarrow The word evil can refer both to evil behavior and to the evil one, that is, Satan.

The point is this: the Lord is faithful even if we fail to help one another. God will strengthen and guard us against Satan and his evil followers. In fact, the Lord will strengthen and guard us against all evil no matter what it is. Even if the evil seems to be conquering us, it will not--not in the final analysis.

- \Rightarrow God will deliver us by working all things out for good.
 - "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Ro.8:28).
- ⇒ God will deliver us by overcoming our failures and completing His work of salvation in us.

"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Ph.1:6).

⇒ God will deliver us by saving us from death.

"And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever" (2 Tim.4:18).

ILLUSTRATION:

Most of us have lived long enough to be disappointed with people from time to time. But the Lord remains faithful. Even when you cannot clearly see Him, the Christian believer knows that God is ever so near and close by!

Picture a little girl flying a kite on the beach. She had her kite so high in the air that

it looked like a speck in the white, cotton clouds.

Her brother was a little bit skeptical. "I don't see anything that looks like a kite. How can you tell that it's still there?" She let him hold the tight string that was wrapped around her hand. "Tug it once, and you will see," said the little girl.

Sure enough. After he pulled on the string, the string pulled back.

Life in Christ is similar to flying an unseen kite. We know He is there by faith. When we are surrounded by evil, He grants to each one of us a tug of His presence when we need it the most.

"Though I walk in the midst of trouble, Thou wilt revive me; Thou wilt stretch forth Thy hand against the wrath of my enemies, And Thy right hand will save me. The Lord will accomplish what concerns me; Thy lovingkindness, O Lord, is everlasting; Do not forsake the works of Thy hands" (Ps.138:7-8).

2. The Lord will motivate the believer to keep His commandments. The Lord actually works within and energizes the believer to will and do God's pleasure, that is, to keep His commandments. When we sense a stirring, some energy being aroused within our hearts to do good, that is the Spirit of God working within us. The Lord will never leave the believer, not completely. So long as the believer is on earth, the Lord will continue to work within him, to stir and energize him to keep God's commandments. This is the reason Paul had confidence in the Thessalonian believers, that they would keep the commandments of the Word that had been taught them.

APPLICATION:

This is a critical fact: a person can tell if he is a true believer or not by the working of the Lord within his heart. If a person keeps the commandments of God, then it is evidence that the Lord is working within his heart; however, if a person is not keeping the commandments of God, then it is evidence that the Lord does not live within his heart and is not working within him.

"And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments" (1 Jn.2:3).

3. The Lord directs the believer's heart into the love of God. This means both God's love for us and our love for God. The word *direct* means to make straight or to be straight. It means to remove obstacles out of the way or to open up. The Lord Jesus Christ takes the genuine believer and opens up his heart; He straightens, directs, and focuses the believer's heart upon the love of God. The result is that the believer learns to love God more and more. His attention and focus become more and more set upon God's love. Therefore, when trials, trouble, temptation, and evil attack the believer, he is able to stand in the love of God and overcome the attack.

"Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (Jude 21).

"And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might" (Dt.6:5).

4. The Lord directs the believer to patiently wait for Christ's return. The Lord Jesus Christ stirs the genuine believer to keep his eyes upon His return. Therefore, when evil strikes, the believer endures and perseveres--stands in strength and patience--keeping his eyes and heart focused upon the glorious hope of Christ, the hope of conquering death and of living forever and ever in perfection with God, the hope of ruling and reigning throughout the whole universe for Christ.

"For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel" (Col.1:5).

OUESTIONS:

1. When is the Lord's presence most real to you? Why?

- 2. What barriers keep your heart from being filled with the love of God and love for God?
- 4. What are some distractions that keep you from being excited about the Lord's return? What can you do to resolve these distractions?

SUMMARY:

If you are going to grow as a Christian and be an effective witness during the end times, the following fundamentals are necessary...

1. The request for prayer.

2. The Lord's faithfulness to the believer.

PERSONAL JOURNAL NOTES: (Reflection & Response)

- 1. The most important thing that I learned from this lesson was:
- 2. The area that I need to work on the most is:
- 3. I can apply this lesson to my life by:
- 4. Closing Statement of Commitment:

John Walvoord. The Thessalonian Epistles, p.146.

Walter B. Knight. Knight's Treasury of 2,000 Illustrations., p.274.

	B. Work & Employ- ment, 3:6-18	walk among you dis- orderly, working not at all, but are busybod- ies.	
1. Withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly— who does not work a. Bc. he disobeys the instructions of God	you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Je- sus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother	12 Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Je-	2. Work—every one of you a. Earn your own living—quietly
No.	tradition which he received of us.	doing.	b. Do not grow weary
b. Bc. you have the example of com-		14 And if any man obey not our word by	3. Discipline the idler, the disorderly: Dis-
mitted workers		this epistle, note that	associate from him
367	haved not ourselves	man, and have no	a. That he may be
	disorderly among you;		ashamed
1) Paul worked night & day	8 Neither did we eat any man's bread for		b. Warn him as a brother
night & day		15 Yet count him not	Dionici
	with labour and travail		
Applie Model	night and day, that we		
	might not be charge-		A CONT. I TO CONT.
2) Paul had the		16 Now the Lord of peace himself give	4. The conclusion: The believer receives
ministerial right		you peace always by	three possessions in
to be supported,	make ourselves an en-	all means. The Lord	Christ
but he did not	sample unto you to		a. A great peace
exercise it c. Bc. you must work	follow us. 10 For even when we	17 The salutation of	b. A special & per- sonal fellowship
or lose your right	were with you, this we		with God's minis-
to eat	commanded you, that	ken in every epistle:	ter
	if any would not work,		
	neither should he eat	18 The grace of our	c. The grace & strength of Jesus Christ
	there are some which		Of Jesus Christ

Section III FINAL WORDS 2 Thessalonians 3:1-18

Study 2: WORK AND EMPLOYMENT

Text: 2 Thessalonians 3:6-18

Aim: To become a more diligent worker, more diligent than ever before.

Memory Verse:

"For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat" (2 Thessalonians 3:10).

INTRODUCTION:

Have you ever know someone who was so caught up in his or her work that he neglected his family, his health, and everything else that you find meaningful in life? How about the opposite extreme? Have you know or seen someone who was downright lazy, who had no ambition, no drive to achieve, to produce, or to provide? Unfortunately societies are full of both extremes. On one hand, some have adopted a life-style that creates work-aholics. On the other hand, some avoid work like it was the plague. Both of these choices are wrong. The force of this text is directed to latter extreme--avoiding work.

This passage concludes the letter of Second Thessalonians. It deals with a very significant subject for our day and time: work and employment. The workplace is full of disorderly workers, workers who slack off and do as little as possible; workers who are men-pleasers, who work only when they see the boss coming. In addition to these, there are many in our society who could be working, but they choose not to work because of laziness and slothfulness; and they have found a way to sponge off the government, social services, churches, and neighbors. The result is that a tragic dullness and a spirit of "give me, give me" have pervaded the workplace. As stated, this is the subject of this passage, a much needed subject.

OUTLINE:

- 1. Withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly--who does not work (v.6-11).
- 2. Work--every one of you (v.12-13).
- 3. Discipline the idler, the disorderly: disassociate from him (v.14-15).
- 4. The conclusion: the believer receives three possessions in Christ (v.16-18).

1. WITHDRAW FROM EVERY BROTHER WHO WALKS DISORDERLY--WHO DOES NOT WORK (v.6-11)

Note: this is a very strong command. It has the force of a military command: it is given "in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ," the supreme commander. There is to be no discussion about the

matter. What is being said is to be obeyed.

"Withdraw...from every brother that walks disorderly" (v.6). Who are the disorderly? Those who do not work. A strange thing had happened in the Thessalonian church. Some of the believers had become excited over the return of the Lord and the promise of being with Him forever in the new heavens and earth. They became so excited that they began to sacrifice all they could to meet the needs of people. But some went too far. They ignored the Lord's words that only God knew when He would be returning, and they began to project dates and declare that His return was about to take place. Therefore, some quit their jobs in order to have more time to minister, and in an act of sacrificial commitment they gave away all they had. The result was catastrophic. They were now having to sponge off the other believers in order to survive. Their action had been most unwise--unwise because believers are to live life as it should be lived so long as they are upon earth. Believers are to set the example as to how life is to be lived, and work is certainly one of the duties of men. Therefore, of all people, believers are to set an example in work. They are to be the very best workmen possible. Quitting work and not working is disorderly behavior; it is totally unacceptable for a true believer. It is so unacceptable that believers are commanded to withdraw from non-workers.

⇒ What does the Lord mean by withdraw? The word means to stay away from the idle worker; to have no fellowship with him. His behavior is not to be indulged or condoned. We are not to put our stamp of approval upon him, nor are we to run the risk

of becoming identified with him.

⇒ Who are the disorderly? They are the idle, the slothful, the lazy. They are the persons who refuse to work, shirk their work, or are slack in their work.

There are four reasons why we are to withdraw from the disorderly or idle worker.

1. The idle worker disobeys the instructions of God (v.6). Note the word *tradition*. It means all the Word of God, whether taught or written (2 Th.2:15). Paul says that he had taught the believers the commandments of God that deal with work; therefore, they were without excuse. They knew better than to sit around idle. If they continued to be idle, slothful, and lazy, the other believers were to withdraw from them. They were deliberately disobeying the instructions of God.

"Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing" (Mt.24:45-46).

"Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord" (Ro.12:11).

2. The idle worker has the example of committed workers. The believers of Thessalonica had the example of Paul; we have the example of committed workers in our day. Paul worked day and night so that he would not owe any man anything (v.7-8). As a minister of the gospel, he had the right to be supported by believers so that he could be free to minister more. But he refused to exercise that right. Why? So that he could set a dynamic example of a diligent worker for the believers (v.9). Note: Paul says "follow us"--follow our example in being a diligent worker:

 \Rightarrow You "know how ye ought to follow us" (v.7).

 \Rightarrow We have set an "example unto you to follow us" (v.9).

APPLICATION:

There is absolutely no excuse for a Christian to be disorderly at his work: idle, slothful, or lazy. Paul set a dynamic example for us, and there are examples of other dynamic Christian workers who surround us. And if by chance there are no examples around us, then we should be following the example of Christ (the carpenter) and Paul (the tentmaker). We should be setting an example for other believers in diligent work.

"Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:34-35).

"And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself" (2 Cor.11:9).

3. The idle worker must work or lose his right to eat (v.10). This fact is stated as clearly as it can be: "if any [will] not work, neither should he eat." Note that this is a command, a command that Paul had preached when he was with the church. Note this fact as well: the commandment deals with those who choose to be idle and refuse to work. It is not dealing with those who are honestly unable to work due to disability or being unable to find employment. If a person is able to work, he is to work. If he refuses, he is not to be fed; he is not to be allowed to sponge off the church, community, or society. There is no excuse for a person not working if he is able to work-not in the sight of God. Too many in the world--millions--are desperate and destitute, dying within and without from loneliness, emptiness, starvation, disease, and sin. Almost every church or social service can put us to work in reaching a world of desperate and dying people who need our help and attention. In God's words: "This we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat."

"And we desire that every one of you do shew the same <u>diligence</u> to the full assurance of hope unto the end: that ye be not <u>slothful</u>, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises" (Heb.6:11-12).

4. The idle worker tends to be a busybody. The mind of man is an active thing. What we tend to overlook is this: the mind is always active; it is never still. It is either thinking positive thoughts or negative and evil thoughts. The point is this: an idle person has an idle mind. His mind is not set upon positive thoughts but upon negative and evil thoughts. An idle mind is the devil's playground. This is the reason why so many idle persons--regardless of their age--get into trouble. The trouble can range all the way from becoming a busybody to murder.

The present passage is dealing with Christians and the trouble caused by being a busybody. Too many believers are busybodies, that is, poking themselves into other people's affairs, tattling, gossiping, and spreading all kinds of talk and rumors. They just go about speaking all kinds of things that they should not. Why? Because they do not stay busy for the Lord by helping and ministering to the needs of those within the community who are hurting, lonely, desperate, dying,

and lost.

"And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not" (1 Tim.5:13).

OUESTIONS:

- 1. Why are you instructed to withdraw from the disorderly, from those who do not work?
- 2. Many cultures reward laziness by allowing people to feed off the government. But what does the church need to teach its members about work? How can it be a part of the solution to idleness and laziness?

What can you do to set an example for others	rs
--	----

at	work	?
	9	~

___at home?

____at church

____in your community?

2. WORK--EVERY ONE OF YOU (v.12-13).

Again, this is a forceful command, a command that comes from the Lord Jesus Christ. But note: it is also an exhortation, a stirring challenge that comes from the Lord. The Lord is not cold or hard about the matter. If a believer has been mistaken about how he should work--if he has been slothful and slack in his work--the Lord will forgive. But the believer must confess his wrong and repent. He must repent by beginning to work and earning his own living. And note how we are to go about earning our living: in quietness. This is in contrast to being a busybody. We are to work with a quiet spirit and mind our own business; we are not to poke ourselves in other people's business.

Note one other point: do not be weary in well-doing. Do not let the idlers discourage you, but stick to your job: be diligent and persevere. Do not slack off no matter what others do. Be a dy-

namic example for the Lord.

"And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you" (1 Th.4:11).

ILLUSTRATION:

Do you tend to lose your focus while you work? Listen to this humorous story:

"Charles the Twelfth, King of Sweden, [while] besieged in Stralsund, was one day dictating a letter to his secretary, when a bombshell from the enemy's works fell upon the

house in which he was, broke through the roof, and burst close to the apartment. The adjoining floor was shivered to pieces; but his own room was uninjured. The report of the shell, however, which seemed to crush the whole house to pieces, alarmed the secre-

tary; and his pen fell from his hand.

"'What's the matter?' said the king to him with a composed countenance. 'Why do you not continue writing?' -- 'Most gracious sire,' replied the latter, 'the bombshell!' -- 'Well,' said the king, 'what has the bombshell to do with the letter? Go on with the writing.'"

This may exaggerate the point a little, but the fact remains that we often allow things and people to distract us from our work. What kinds of *bombshells* keep you from being diligent and from working hard?

OUESTIONS:

1. What Christian traits in the workplace cause others to be attracted to Christ?

2. On the other hand, what traits have you noticed at work where Christians turned off their unbelieving peers?

3. What practical things can you do to improve your witness at work?

3. DISCIPLINE THE IDLER, THE DISORDERLY: DISASSOCIATE FROM HIM (v.14-15).

Withdraw from him and have no fellowship with him. Note why: that he may be ashamed. The hope is that his shame will motivate him to get up and get to work.

However, the idle person is not to be disciplined as an enemy but as a brother. The discipline is not to be done in a spirit of some superior, but in the spirit of a fellow believer, admonishing and

warning him of what the Lord has to say about the matter.

The importance of the discipline is seen in the exactness of the words of Paul. Paul says, "Note that man"; that is, mark him out and disapprove of his behavior. Let him know that his refusal to work is not acceptable. Do not condone and indulge his idleness. Withdraw and have no fellowship with him. Also warn him; warning is essential. He must be admonished. Warning and letting him experience shame are his only hope of changing. Being warned and feeling shame might stir him to repent, to get up and get to work.

"Now we exhort, you brethren, warn them that are <u>unruly</u>, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men" (1 Th.5:14).

OUESTIONS:

1. What should your attiitude and behavior be toward the idlers, those who only work half-heartedly, those who do not give an honest day's work?

2. What is the ultimate objective of disciplining someone who does not work? With what attitude should discipline be taken?

4. THE CONCLUSION: THE BELIEVER RECEIVES THREE POSSESSIONS IN CHRIST (v.16-18).

Note: this is a prayer of Paul for all the believers of the church.

1. The believer receives peace from "the Lord of peace Himself." Note the phrase "always by all means." The believer receives peace "at all times and in all ways--under all circumstances

and conditions, whatever comes" (Amplified New Testament).

2. The believer receives fellowship, a very special and personal fellowship. The church was dear to Paul. He sensed ever so deeply a close tie, a spiritual fellowship that bound his heart to the believers. Thus, he became concerned and was aroused to write and deal with the problems that

had infiltrated the church. He wrote because of the special bond of fellowship between him and the church.

Note: it was Paul's practice to dictate his letters to a secretary and then to sign them. This is what he means by the statement, "the salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I wrote" (v.17).

The believer receives grace--the undeserved favor and strength of Jesus Christ. 3.

ILLUSTRATION:

Paul ends this letter on a very positive note for the Christian believer--an invitation to receive the grace of God. Author Patsy Clairmont reminds her readers of how grace gives the believer another chance:

"I was so familiar with our five-mile stretch of country road into town that I developed a rhythm to my driving. Sometimes my rhythm was faster than the posted pace. After following me into town on several occasions, Les [her husband] mentioned I needed to lighten up on my footwork.

"At times when I drove to town, I wouldn't remember the ride in because I was on autopilot. I knew every curve and turn by heart, and my mind tended to wander.

"Often I would sing my way to town, and if the song happened to be a bouncy one, without realizing it. I would drive to the beat. This wasn't a problem if I was singing 'How Great Thou Art.' However, when I got into the rousing chorus of 'I'll Fly Away,' my little wagon seemed to be doing that very thing. Les warned me more than once to pay closer attention to my selections.

"On one particularly beautiful autumn day, I was on my way to speak for an area woman's retreat. My six-year-old, Jason, was in the back seat, looking forward to seeing his friends at the child-care room. I was into the rhythm of the road while I

rehearsed my opening thoughts with great enthusiasm.

"I glanced in my rearview mirror as something beckoned for my attention." There I spotted someone else who seemed to be quite enthusiastic in his desire to share some thoughts with me. A colorful character. I could tell by the red and blue circular lights on his car.

"As he approached my car, I couldn't help chuckling as I pictured Les doing the

'I told you so' nod.

'Jason questioned, 'Mom, why are you laughing?'

"'Oh. honey, it's just Daddy told me that would happen one day.'

"The nice officer was not laughing. He leaned down and boomed with a voice that instantly reduced me to a teeny person, 'And where are you going in such a hurry?'

'I meekly looked into his convicting face and whispered, 'Church.'

"'You're kidding!' he bellowed.

"'I'm the speaker,' I confessed. 'My topic is 'Renewed Living.' I guess I'm not doing too well...with it,' I trailed off, wishing I could disappear.

He asked me a series of intelligent questions that I could not answer with any degree of accuracy-things like 'Where is your car registration?' and 'Where is your title?'

'I was totally in the wrong, which was obvious to all of us.

"So I was amazed when he announced, 'I'm going to let you go without a ticket. but you must slow down and place the proper papers in your car.

"That day the officer was Jesus. He extended mercy when I didn't deserve it."2

And that is the glory of grace--receiving what you don't deserve!

OUESTIONS:

- 1. Relate an experience when God's grace was evident in your life. What lessons did your experience teach you about God's character?
- 2. Is it really possible to experience peace at all times and in all circumstances? How?
- 3. Are you failing to take full advantage of the Christian fellowship that is available to you? In what ways can you make the fellowship more meaningful to you?

SUMMARY:

Work should be a wonderful thing for the Christian believer because God has created you for work. How you work is one of the critical pillars that distinguishes Biblical Christianity from the other religions of the world. This lesson shows you how to deal with those believers who refuse to work:

1. Withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly--who does not work.

2. Work--every one of you.

- 3. Discipline the idler, the disorderly: disassociate from him.
- 4. The conclusion: the believer receives three possessions in Christ.

PERSONAL JOURNAL NOTES: (Reflection & Response)

- 1. The most important thing that I learned from this lesson was:
- 2. The area that I need to work on the most is:
- 3. I can apply this lesson to my life by:
- 4. Closing Statement of Commitment:

Elon Foster, Editor. 6,000 Sermon Illustrations, p.674-675.
Patsy Clairmont. God Uses Cracked Pots. (Pomona, CA: Focus on the Family Publishing, 1991), p.61-62.

1 & 2 THESSALONIANS

1 & 2 THESSALONIANS

REMEMBER: When you look up a subject and turn to the Scripture reference, you have not only the Scripture, you have an outline and a discussion (commentary) of the Scripture and subject.

This is one of the <u>GREAT VALUES</u> of the <u>Teacher's Outline & Study Bible</u>. Once you have all the volumes, you will have not only what all other Bible indexes give you, that is, a list of all the subjects and their Scripture references, <u>BUT</u> you will also have...

- An outline of every Scripture and subject in the Bible.
- A discussion (commentary) on every Scripture and subject.
- Every subject supported by other Scriptures or cross references.

<u>DISCOVER THE GREAT VALUE</u> for yourself. Quickly glance below to the very first subject of the Index of Thessalonians. It is:

ADULTERY

ADULTERY

Discussed. Results.

Discussed.

Cheats a brother. To be avenged by God.

1 Th.4:1-8

1 Th.4:1-8

1 Th.4:6-8

Turn to the reference. Glance at the Scripture and outline of the Scripture, then read the commentary. You will immediately see the GREAT VALUE of the INDEX of the Teacher's Outline & Study Bible.

Four r.	1 Th.4:1-8
FFLICTION Meaning.	1 Th.3:7-10
NTICHRIST Appearance. When he will <u>a</u> .	
After God takes the restraints off sin.	2 Th.2:6-8
After two events.	2 Th.2:3
Described.	
Man of sin (lawlessness).	2 Th.2:3
Son of perdition.	2 Th.2:3
That wicked (one).	2 Th.2:8
Discussed.	2 Th.2:4-9
End of. Slain & destroyed by Christ.	2 Th.2:8
Followers of. Discussed.	2 Th.2:10-12
How a. rises to power.	2 Th.2:4-9
A political ruler.	2 Th.2:4
A religious ruler.	2 111.2.4
Nature - Character.	2 Th.2:4
Discussed.	2 Th.2:4
Embodiment of Satan.	2 111.2.0

Work.	
To carry on Satan's work.	2 Th.2:9
To set up imperial or state worship.	2 Th.2:4
APPOINT - APPOINTED	
The believer is a. to.	
Afflictions.	1 Th.3:3-5
Salvation.	1 Th.5:9
APOSTASY	
Meaning.	2 Th.2:3
ASSURANCE	
Of the believer. Discussed.	2 Th.2:13
Of the believer. Source. God will preserve the believer.	1 Th.5:23-24
Comes by. God's faithfulness.	2 Th.3:3-5
Comes by: God b falantamess:	
ATHENS	
Paul visited, stayed in all alone.	1 Th.3:1
2 662 7 20200 6 9 6 22 62 62 62 62 62 62 62 62 62 62 62 6	
BELIEVER	
Duty.	
Four practical duties.	1 Th.4:9-12
How the \underline{b} , is to behave in light of Christ's return.	1 Th.5:4-11
How to live in light of the Lord's return. Many exhortations.	1 Th.5:12-18
To be pure.	1 Th.4:1-8
To be sober, alert, and watchful for the Lord's return.	1 Th.5:4-11
To comfort & edify.	1 Th.5:11
To highly esteem.	1 Th.5:12-13
To live a morally pure life.	1 Th.3.12-13 1 Th.4:1-8
To mind one's own business.	1 Th.4:1-6
To ministers.	1 111.4:11
	1 Th.5:25
To pray for m. To study to be quiet.	
	1 Th.4:11
To walk pleasing to God.	1 Th.4:1-8
To watch & not be sleepy.	1 Th.5:2-11
Toward God. Several exhortations.	1 Th.5:16-22
Toward the church Several enhantstiere	1 Th.5:12-13
Toward the church. Several exhortations.	1 Th.2:14-15
Life - Walk. (See Related Subjects)	1 775 4 1 10
A model life.	1 Th.4:1-12
A walk that pleases God.	1 Th.4:1-8
Discussed.	1 Th.4:9-12
In light of Jesus' return.	1 Th.5:4-11
Marks - Characteristics.	1 777 0 1 10
A strong faith.	1 Th.3:1-10
A strong and true minister.	1 Th.2:1-12
A strong conversion.	1 Th.1:5-10
A strong encouragement.	1 Th.3:7-10
A strong love.	1 Th.3:11-13
A strong people.	1 Th.2:13-20
Name - Title.	
Child of Light.	1 Th.5:4-5
Child of the day.	1 Th.5:4-5

Nature. Light. Security of. (See ASSURANCE; SECURITY) Some final words to.	1 Th.5:4-11
Some man words to.	1 Th.5:25-28
BELIEVERS	
Life - Walk. (See Related Subjects) In light of the end times.	0.000 0.10.10
in light of the cha times.	2 Th.2:13-17
BRIGHTNESS	
Meaning.	2 Th.2:8
CALL - CALLED (See MINISTER - MINISTERS)	
Purpose of.	
To be excellent, virtuous.	1 Th.4:3-8
To obtain glory.	2 Th.2:14
CHOSEN	
Discussed.	2 Th.2:13
Meaning.	2 Th.2:13
CHRISTIAN - CHRISTIANS (See BELIEVER; PROFESSION ONLY; WARNED - WARNINGS)	
CHURCH	
Basis - Foundation.	
A strong conversion.	1 Th.1:5-10
"In" God the Father & "in" the Lord Jesus Christ.	1 Th.1:1
Duty.	
Discussed.	1 Th.1:1-3:13;
	5:12-28
To be a strong \underline{c} .	5:12-28 1 Th.1:1-4
To be a strong c. To follow examples.	5:12-28
To be a strong \underline{c} .	5:12-28 1 Th.1:1-4 1 Th.2:14-16 1 Th.1:1-3:13
To be a strong c. To follow examples. Marks - Characteristics. A model c. A strong c.	5:12-28 1 Th.1:1-4 1 Th.2:14-16 1 Th.1:1-3:13 1 Th.1:1-4
To be a strong c. To follow examples. Marks - Characteristics. A model c. A strong c. A strong faith.	5:12-28 1 Th.1:1-4 1 Th.2:14-16 1 Th.1:1-3:13 1 Th.1:1-4 1 Th.3:1-6
To be a strong c. To follow examples. Marks - Characteristics. A model c. A strong c. A strong faith. A strong & true minister.	5:12-28 1 Th.1:1-4 1 Th.2:14-16 1 Th.1:1-3:13 1 Th.1:1-4 1 Th.3:1-6 1 Th.2:1-12
To be a strong c. To follow examples. Marks - Characteristics. A model c. A strong c. A strong faith. A strong & true minister. A strong conversion.	5:12-28 1 Th.1:1-4 1 Th.2:14-16 1 Th.1:1-3:13 1 Th.1:1-4 1 Th.3:1-6 1 Th.2:1-12 1 Th.1:5-10
To be a strong c. To follow examples. Marks - Characteristics. A model c. A strong c. A strong faith. A strong & true minister. A strong conversion. A strong encouragement.	5:12-28 1 Th.1:1-4 1 Th.2:14-16 1 Th.1:1-3:13 1 Th.1:1-4 1 Th.3:1-6 1 Th.2:1-12
To be a strong c. To follow examples. Marks - Characteristics. A model c. A strong c. A strong faith. A strong & true minister. A strong conversion. A strong encouragement. A strong love.	5:12-28 1 Th.1:1-4 1 Th.2:14-16 1 Th.1:1-3:13 1 Th.1:1-4 1 Th.3:1-6 1 Th.2:1-12 1 Th.1:5-10 1 Th.3:7-10 1 Th.3:11-13 1 Th.2:13-20
To be a strong c. To follow examples. Marks - Characteristics. A model c. A strong c. A strong faith. A strong & true minister. A strong conversion. A strong encouragement. A strong love. A strong people. Need - Needs. To be a strong c.	5:12-28 1 Th.1:1-4 1 Th.2:14-16 1 Th.1:1-3:13 1 Th.1:1-4 1 Th.3:1-6 1 Th.2:1-12 1 Th.1:5-10 1 Th.3:7-10 1 Th.3:11-13 1 Th.2:13-20 1 Th.1:1-4
To be a strong c. To follow examples. Marks - Characteristics. A model c. A strong c. A strong faith. A strong & true minister. A strong conversion. A strong encouragement. A strong love. A strong people. Need - Needs. To be a strong c. Basis - Foundation. A model c.	5:12-28 1 Th.1:1-4 1 Th.2:14-16 1 Th.1:1-3:13 1 Th.1:1-4 1 Th.3:1-6 1 Th.2:1-12 1 Th.1:5-10 1 Th.3:7-10 1 Th.3:11-13 1 Th.2:13-20
To be a strong c. To follow examples. Marks - Characteristics. A model c. A strong c. A strong faith. A strong & true minister. A strong conversion. A strong encouragement. A strong love. A strong people. Need - Needs. To be a strong c. Basis - Foundation. A model c. Persecuted - Persecution. (See PERSECUTION)	5:12-28 1 Th.1:1-4 1 Th.2:14-16 1 Th.1:1-3:13 1 Th.1:1-4 1 Th.3:1-6 1 Th.2:1-12 1 Th.1:5-10 1 Th.3:7-10 1 Th.3:11-13 1 Th.2:13-20 1 Th.1:1-4 2 Th.1:1-5
To be a strong c. To follow examples. Marks - Characteristics. A model c. A strong c. A strong faith. A strong & true minister. A strong conversion. A strong encouragement. A strong love. A strong people. Need - Needs. To be a strong c. Basis - Foundation. A model c. Persecuted - Persecution. (See PERSECUTION) Matures a c.	5:12-28 1 Th.1:1-4 1 Th.2:14-16 1 Th.1:1-3:13 1 Th.1:1-4 1 Th.3:1-6 1 Th.2:1-12 1 Th.1:5-10 1 Th.3:7-10 1 Th.3:11-13 1 Th.2:13-20 1 Th.1:1-4 2 Th.1:1-5
To be a strong c. To follow examples. Marks - Characteristics. A model c. A strong c. A strong faith. A strong & true minister. A strong conversion. A strong encouragement. A strong love. A strong people. Need - Needs. To be a strong c. Basis - Foundation. A model c. Persecuted - Persecution. (See PERSECUTION) Matures a c. Problems. Ignorance of the antichrist.	5:12-28 1 Th.1:1-4 1 Th.2:14-16 1 Th.1:1-3:13 1 Th.1:1-4 1 Th.3:1-6 1 Th.2:1-12 1 Th.1:5-10 1 Th.3:7-10 1 Th.3:11-13 1 Th.2:13-20 1 Th.1:1-4 2 Th.1:1-5
To be a strong c. To follow examples. Marks - Characteristics. A model c. A strong c. A strong faith. A strong & true minister. A strong conversion. A strong encouragement. A strong love. A strong love. A strong people. Need - Needs. To be a strong c. Basis - Foundation. A model c. Persecuted - Persecution. (See PERSECUTION) Matures a c. Problems. Ignorance of the antichrist.	5:12-28 1 Th.1:1-4 1 Th.2:14-16 1 Th.1:1-3:13 1 Th.1:1-4 1 Th.3:1-6 1 Th.2:1-12 1 Th.1:5-10 1 Th.3:7-10 1 Th.3:11-13 1 Th.2:13-20 1 Th.1:1-4 2 Th.1:1-5 2 Th.1:3-5 2 Th.2:3; 2:5
To be a strong c. To follow examples. Marks - Characteristics. A model c. A strong c. A strong faith. A strong & true minister. A strong conversion. A strong encouragement. A strong love. A strong people. Need - Needs. To be a strong c. Basis - Foundation. A model c. Persecuted - Persecution. (See PERSECUTION) Matures a c. Problems. Ignorance of the antichrist.	5:12-28 1 Th.1:1-4 1 Th.2:14-16 1 Th.1:1-3:13 1 Th.1:1-4 1 Th.3:1-6 1 Th.2:1-12 1 Th.1:5-10 1 Th.3:7-10 1 Th.3:11-13 1 Th.2:13-20 1 Th.1:1-4 2 Th.1:1-5
To be a strong c. To follow examples. Marks - Characteristics. A model c. A strong c. A strong faith. A strong & true minister. A strong conversion. A strong encouragement. A strong love. A strong people. Need - Needs. To be a strong c. Basis - Foundation. A model c. Persecuted - Persecution. (See PERSECUTION) Matures a c. Problems. Ignorance of the antichrist. CHURCH DISCIPLINE Of idle workers.	5:12-28 1 Th.1:1-4 1 Th.2:14-16 1 Th.1:1-3:13 1 Th.1:1-4 1 Th.3:1-6 1 Th.2:1-12 1 Th.1:5-10 1 Th.3:7-10 1 Th.3:11-13 1 Th.2:13-20 1 Th.1:1-4 2 Th.1:1-5 2 Th.1:3-5 2 Th.2:3; 2:5
To be a strong c. To follow examples. Marks - Characteristics. A model c. A strong c. A strong faith. A strong & true minister. A strong conversion. A strong encouragement. A strong love. A strong people. Need - Needs. To be a strong c. Basis - Foundation. A model c. Persecuted - Persecution. (See PERSECUTION) Matures a c. Problems. Ignorance of the antichrist. CHURCH DISCIPLINE Of idle workers.	5:12-28 1 Th.1:1-4 1 Th.2:14-16 1 Th.1:1-3:13 1 Th.1:1-4 1 Th.3:1-6 1 Th.2:1-12 1 Th.1:5-10 1 Th.3:7-10 1 Th.3:11-13 1 Th.2:13-20 1 Th.1:1-4 2 Th.1:1-5 2 Th.1:3-5 2 Th.2:3; 2:5
To be a strong c. To follow examples. Marks - Characteristics. A model c. A strong c. A strong faith. A strong & true minister. A strong conversion. A strong encouragement. A strong love. A strong people. Need - Needs. To be a strong c. Basis - Foundation. A model c. Persecuted - Persecution. (See PERSECUTION) Matures a c. Problems. Ignorance of the antichrist. CHURCH DISCIPLINE Of idle workers. COMFORT Meaning. Of whom.	5:12-28 1 Th.1:1-4 1 Th.2:14-16 1 Th.1:1-3:13 1 Th.1:1-4 1 Th.3:1-6 1 Th.2:1-12 1 Th.1:5-10 1 Th.3:7-10 1 Th.3:11-13 1 Th.2:13-20 1 Th.1:1-4 2 Th.1:1-5 2 Th.1:3-5 2 Th.2:3; 2:5 2 Th.3:6-18 1 Th.3:1-2; 5:11
To be a strong c. To follow examples. Marks - Characteristics. A model c. A strong c. A strong faith. A strong & true minister. A strong conversion. A strong encouragement. A strong love. A strong people. Need - Needs. To be a strong c. Basis - Foundation. A model c. Persecuted - Persecution. (See PERSECUTION) Matures a c. Problems. Ignorance of the antichrist. CHURCH DISCIPLINE Of idle workers. COMFORT Meaning.	5:12-28 1 Th.1:1-4 1 Th.2:14-16 1 Th.1:1-3:13 1 Th.1:1-4 1 Th.3:1-6 1 Th.2:1-12 1 Th.1:5-10 1 Th.3:7-10 1 Th.3:11-13 1 Th.2:13-20 1 Th.1:1-4 2 Th.1:1-5 2 Th.1:3-5 2 Th.2:3; 2:5 2 Th.3:6-18

CONSOLATION Meaning.	2 Th.2:16-17
CONVERSION A strong c. Marks of.	1 Th.1:5-10 1 Th.1:5-10
CRITICISM - CRITICIZING Duty. To mind one's own business.	1 Th.4:11
CROWN - CROWNS Described. As a c. of rejoicing.	1 Th.2:19-20
DARKNESS Nature of. Not the nature of believers.	1 Th.5:4-11
DAY OF THE LORD Discussed.	1 Th.4:13-5:3; 5:1-3; 5:4-5; 2 Th.2:1-3
DEATH - DEAD, THE Described. Sleep.	1 Th.4:14-15
Of believers. Are present with the Lord. What happens to dead believers.	1 Th.4:14-15 1 Th.4:13-5:3
DECEIVE - DECEPTION Who deceives. Antichrist. Who is d. Discussed.	2 Th.2:9; 2:10 2 Th.2:11
DESTRUCTION Meaning.	2 Th.1:9
DISTRESS Meaning.	1 Th.3:7-10
DIRECT Meaning.	2 Th.3:3-5
EDIFY - EDIFICATION Meaning.	1 Th.5:11
ELECTION Discussed.	2 Th.2:13
EMPLOYEE Discussed.	
Discipline of idle workers. Work & employment.	2 Th.3:6-18 2 Th.3:6-18
EMPLOYMENT Discussed. Work & e.	2 Th.3:6-18

ENCOURAGEMENT	
A strong e.	1 Th.3:7-10
END TIME Christ's return & the world's end.	
Day of the Lord.	1 Th.5:1-3; 5:4-5; 2 Th.2:1-3
Glimpse into the end time. How to behave while waiting.	2 Th.1:6-2:17 1 Th.5:4-11; 5:12-28
Judgment of unbelievers. Resurrection, The. Two events necessary before Christ's return. Discussed. The day of the Lord.	2 Th.2:12 1 Th.4:13-5:3 2 Th.2:1-3 1 Th.4:13-5:3
	1 Th.5:1-3; 5:4-5
ESTABLISH Meaning.	1 Th.3:1-2; 2 Th.3:3-5
EVIL Duty. To abstain even from the appearance of <u>e</u> .	1 Th.5:22
ENDURANCE Meaning.	2 Th.1:4
EVIL Meaning. Means both evil & the evil one or Satan. Restraint of. By God.	2 Th.3:3-5 2 Th.2:6-8
FAITH Discussed. A growing faith. Duty. To be strong in faith. Kinds. A growing faith. What f. does. Stirs arduous labor.	2 Th.1:3 1 Th.3:1-10 2 Th.1:3 1 Th.1:3
FAITHFULNESS Of Christ. To the believer. In three areas. Of God. Will preserve the believer.	2 Th.3:3-5 1 Th.5:23-24
FALLING AWAY In the end time. Discussed.	2 Th.2:3
FORNICATION Duty. To abstain from f. Meaning.	1 Th.4:1-8 1 Th.4:3-5
GLORY Of Jesus Christ. When He returns. Of the believer. Discussed.	2 Th.1:10 2 Th.2:14

GOD Faithfulness of. Discussed.	2 Th.3:1-5
Misconceptions about. Far off in outer space, removed from & disinterested in man. Name - Title. God of peace.	1 Th.3:11 1 Th.5:23
Nature. As a Father. Not far off in outer space, but near. Faithful. Will preserve the believer.	1 Th.3:11 1 Th.5:23-24
GOSPEL	
Duty. Not to preach in word only. Not to preach to please people. To preach a pure g. To preach the g. as it should be preached.	1 Th.1:5 1 Th.2:5 1 Th.2:3-6 1 Th.1:5
GRACE Meaning.	1 Th.1:1
HELL Described.	
Everlasting destruction. From the presence of the Lord.	2 Th.1:9 2 Th.1:9
Who is to be in h. Those who do not know God. Those who do not obey the gospel.	2 Th.1:8 2 Th.1:8
HOLY - HOLINESS Duty. To live a life of purity.	1 Th.4:1-8
HOLY SPIRIT A Closer Look.	
Believer's duty. Not to quench. Quenching the Spirit. Sins against. Discussed. Restrains sin. Work. To restrain evil.	1 Th.5:19 1 Th.5:19 1 Th.5:19 2 Th.2:6-8 1 Th.2:6-8
HOPE Acts - Word of. Stirs endurance in labor.	1 Th.1:3
DIE - IDLENESS Discussed. Work & employment.	1 Th.4:11-12
Duty. To work & not be idle.	1 Th.4:11-12
DOLS - IDOLATRY Duty. To turn to God from i.	1 Th.1:9-10
MMORALITY Results.	
Cheats a brother. To be avenged by God. Results. Four r.	1 Th.4:6-8 1 Th.4:6-8

3	
IESUS CHRIST	
Death. Substitutionary. Died for us. Deity. Equal with God. Prayed to. Described as. The Day of the Lord. Duty.	1 Th.5:8-10 1 Th.3:11 1 Th.5:1-3
How the believer is to behave in light of the r. To be watchful for the r. To wait for.	1 Th.5:4-11 1 Th.5:4-11 1 Th.1:9-10
Events. Shall catch up believers. Shall resurrect the dead. Will involve the return of all dead believers. Faithfulness of. To the believer. In three areas. Results. The righteous judgment of God. Return - Second Coming. (See END TIMES) Described. As "that day." Discussed.	1 Th.4:16-18 1 Th.4:16-18 1 Th.4:13-18 2 Th.3:3-5 2 Th.1:6-12 2 Th.1:10 1 Th.4:13-5:3;
Duty. To wait expectantlyevery day. Effect upon human behavior. Events of. When \underline{C} . is to return. After two events.	5:4-11; 5:12-28 1 Th.1:9-10 1 Th.5:12-28 1 Th.4:13-5:3 2 Th.2:3
TEWS	
Sins of.	1 Th.2:15-16
HIDOMENT	
Described. As punishment and destruction. Discussed. Righteousness of God.	2 Th.1:9 2 Th.1:6-12
How God judges. Allows life to perish & become corruptible. By allowing a judicial judgment. Kinds. Judicial j. of God.	2 Th.2:10-12 2 Th.2:11 2 Th.1:9; 2:11; 2:12
Man and j. Man is perishing; he is damned now. Of followers of antichrist. Discussed.	2 Th.2:10-12 2 Th.2:11; 2:12
When - Time of. The day of the Lord. When Christ returns.	2 Th.2:1-3 2 Th.1:6-12
TUSTICE	
Fact. All injustices to be corrected. Is essential.	2 Th.1:6 2 Th.1:6
KEEP	0.00
Meaning.	2 Th.3:3-5
LABOR - LABORERS	
Duty. To work with your own hands.	1 Th.4:11-12
Why God demands that we 1.	1 Th.4:11-12

Duty.	
Discussed.	2 Th.3:6-18
To withdraw from disorderly 1.	2 Th.3:6-11
LAWLESSNESS, MAN OF	
Antichrist, The.	2 Th.2:3
LAZY - LAZINESS	
Discussed. Work & employment.	2 Th.3:6-18
LIFE	
Duty. To walk pleasing God.	1 Th.4:1-8
Kinds of. The model 1.	1 Th.4:1-12
LIGHT	
L. is the nature of believers.	1 Th.5:4-11
LORD, DAY OF THE	
Discussed.	1 Th.5:1-3;
	2 Th.2:1-3
LOVE	
A Closer Look. Discussed. Acts - work of. Stirs diligent labor.	1 Th.3:11-13 1 Th.1:3
Duty. To grow in love more & more.	1 Th.1:3
Importance of. Stirs diligent labor.	1 Th.1:3
Kinds of. A strong 1.	1 Th.3:11-13
Abounding 1.	2 Th.1:3
Brotherly love.	1 Th.4:9-10; 2 Th.1:3
Four kinds.	1 Th.3:12
Results. Presented unblameable before God.	1 Th.3:13
MAN	
Depravity. Is damned & perishing.	2 Th.2:12
MAN OF SIN	
Antichrist, The.	2 Th.2:3-4
MARRIAGE	
Duty.	
To know that one must possess his or her spouse. To know that one must take care of the needs of his	1 Th.4:3-5
or her spouse.	1 Th.4:3-5
	2 2211110
MINISTERS Described.	
As being like a father.	1 Th.2:7-8
As being like a mother. Discussed. A strong & true m.	1 Th.2:7-8
Discussed. A strong & true III.	1 Th.2:1-12

Duty.	
Not to be covetous for position, livelihood. To concentrate on preaching the gospel, not eloquence.	1 Th.2:5; 2:6
To labor night and day.	1 Th.1:5 1 Th.2:9
To live a clean, moral life.	1 Th.2.3
To preach the gospel as it should be preached.	1 Th.1:5
MORALS - MORALITY	
Discussed.	
Sexual purity.	1 Th.4:1-8
To live a m. life.	1 Th.4:1-8
MORAL UNIVERSE	
The universe is m.	2 Th.1:6
PATIENCE	
Meaning.	2 Th.1:4
DATIT	
PAUL Accusations against.	
Discussed.	1 Th.2:1-12
Immorality.	1 Th.2:3; cp.
Ministry. Did not receive support for m. Worked.	2 Cor.1:12 2 Th.3:6-11
Sufferings - Trials of.	2 111.5.0-11
In Corinth. Some terrible t.	1 Th.3:7-10
Shamefully treated.	1 Th.2:2
PEACE	
Meaning.	1 Th.1:1
PERDITION	
Meaning.	2 Th.2:4
PERISH - PERISHING Meaning.	2 Th.1:9
Who the p. are. Discussed.	2 Th.2:10
·	
PERSECUTION Of the church at Thessalonica.	1 Th.2:1-12
Types. Discussed.	1 Th.3:3-5
Why believers are p.	1 Th.3:3-5
PERSECUTION	
Duty. To pray for deliverance.	2 Th.3:1-2
Example. Picture of a model church under p.	2 Th.1:1-5
How to overcome. Picture of a model church under p.	2 Th.1:1-5 2 Th.1:5
Is a sign of coming judgment. Of Thessalonian church. Described.	2 Th.1:6
Results. Proves a person's faith-that he is worthy of heaven.	2 Th.1:5
PERSEVERANCE Duty. Not to be moved by persecution.	1 Th.3:3-5
Duty. Not to be moved by personation.	

POWER Duty. To preach the gospel in power. Source. For preaching. Discussed.	1 Th.1:5-10 1 Th.1:5
PRAYER	
Duty. To pray for deliverance from persecution. To pray for the Word of God to have free course. To pray without ceasing.	2 Th.3:1-2 2 Th.3:1-2 1 Th.5:17
PREACH - PREACHING Discussed. A strong & true minister p. the gospel.	1 Th.1:5-10; 2:1-12
Duty.	2:1-12
To p. boldly. To p. in power & in the Holy Spirit. To p. the gospel. To p. as it should be preached.	1 Th.2:2 1 Th.1:5 1 Th.1:5
To please God, not man. Not to use flattering words, coveting position, livelihood.	1 Th.2:5-6
PROPHECY Duty. Not to despise the gift of p.	1 Th.5:20
PROVE Duty. To p. all things.	1 Th.5:21
PUNISHMENT Meaning.	2 Th.1:9
OUIET - QUIETNESS Duty. To study to be q.	1 Th.4:11
RECOMPENSE Discussed.	2 Th.1:6
REJOICE - REJOICING Duty. To r. evermore.	1 Th.5:16
RELIGION, STATE To be enforced by antichrist.	2 Th.2:4
REPENT - REPENTANCE Duty. To turn to God from idols.	1 Th.1:9-10
RESURRECTION Discussed. Events. Order. Discussed.	1 Th.4:13-5:3 1 Th.4:13-5:3
REWARDS	
Crowns. Of rejoicing. Of soul-winner. Described - Identified as. Crowns.	1 Th.2:19-20 1 Th.2:19-20 1 Th.2:19-20

SALVATION Assurance of. (See ASSURANCE)	
Discussed. Duty. To stand fast & cling to the Word of God. Resources. Fivefold.	2 Th.2:13-17 2 Th.2:15 2 Th.2:16-17
SANCTIFICATION Duty. To live a moral & pure life.	1 Th.4:1-8
SATAN	
Names - Titles. A Closer Look. Satan. The tempter.	1 Th.2:18 1 Th.3:5
Work - Strategy. To hinder the gospel & believers. To stop & weaken the growth of churches.	1 Th.2:18 1 Th.2:18
SEASONS Meaning.	1 Th.5:1-3
SECURITY	
Of believers. Discussed. Of God. God will preserve the believer.	2 Th.2:13 1 Th.5:23-24
Duty. To abstain even from the appearance of s. Fact. Is presently restrained. Restraint of. By God.	1 Th.5:22 2 Th.2:6 2 Th.2:6-8
SIN, MAN OF Antichrist, The.	2 Th.2:3
SLOTHFUL Discussed. Work & employment.	2 Th.3:6-18
SON OF PERDITION Antichrist, The.	2 Th.2:3
SOUL-WINNING (See WITNESSING)	
SOUL-WINNING, CROWN OF Meaning.	1 Th.2:19-20
STABLISH Meaning.	2 Th.2:16-17
STUDY Duty. To s. to be quiet.	1 Th.4:11
TEACHING - TRAINING (See CHRISTIAN FAITH; DOCTRINE) Duty. To t. about the antichrist.	2 Th.2:5

TEMPTATION To abstain from even the appearance of evil.	1 Th.5:22
TEST - TESTING Duty. To test & prove all things.	1 Th.5:21
THANKSGIVING Duty. To give thanks in everything.	1 Th.5:18
TIMES AND SEASONS, THE Meaning.	1 Th.5:1-3
TRIALS - TRIBULATION Deliverance through. How the church progresses under t.	2 Th.1:4-5
UNIVERSE Fact. Injustices shall be rectified.	2 Th.1:6
WITNESS - WITNESSING Duty. To win souls. Reason. Results. A crown of rejoicing in the day of Christ.	1 Th.2:19-20 1 Th.2:19-20
WORD OF GOD A Closer Look. Described as. The words of God. Inspiration. Of God, not of men. Nature of. God's word. Not the word of men, but God. Discussed. Must be carried forth by men. Not the word of men, but of God. Duty.	1 Th.2:13 1 Th.2:13 1 Th.2:13 1 Th.2:13 1 Th.1:2-13 1 Th.1:2-13 1 Th.2:13
A Closer Look. To receive as God's word. To pray for the \underline{W} , to have free course & be glorified.	1 Th.2:13 1 Th.3:1-2
WORK (See EMPLOYEE) Discussed. Disorderly w. Duty.	2 Th.3:6-18 2 Th.3:6-11
To w. with your own hands. Why God demands that we w. Reasons. Why w. Three reasons.	1 Th.4:11-12 1 Th.4:11-12 1 Th.4:11-12
WORLD Nature of. Is immoral.	2 Th.1:6
WRATH Deliverance from. By Jesus.	1 Th.1:9-10; 5:8-10

1 & 2 THESSALONIANS

(The Scripture Index follows the Order of the Books of the Bible)

	<u>Page</u>		Page	1	Page
Genesis		Zechariah		Mark	
1:28	82	8:23	30	6:4	80
2:15	82			9:23	128
6:3	150	Matthew		12:29-31	66
		4:19	53	13:14	144
Deuteronom	Y	5:14	96		
6:5	175	6:23	158	Luke	
7:6-7	164	6:33	82, 113, 127	4:6	153
		7:2	81, 158	9:23	27, 111, 113
Joshua		7:7	107	10:20	107
23:8	167	7:26-27	125, 126	12:15	111
		10:14	80	13:3	156
Judges		10:28	29	17:26-30	93
5:31	96	12:23-24	110	20:36	91
J.31		12:31	109	23:43	88
Job		12:31-32	110	25.15	
32:21	39	12:33	110	John	
J2.21	3)	12:37	110	1:41	53
Psalms		13:16	47	3:3	164
23:4	127	13:30	137	3:16	18, 125
51:4	74	13:39	134	3:17-19	99
138:7-8	174	16:15-18	18	3:18	32
147:15	174	16:18	125	3:19	156
147:15	1/2	16:27	134	4:35-36	41
D 1		18:9	137	5:22	134
Proverbs	81	20:26-28	40	5:28-29	31
17:1		21:22	20	5:39	48
29:25	39	22:39	65	6:40	88
		23:13	110	6:44	165
Song of Solo			50	8:44	112
1:4	150	23:31		8:51	88
		23:33	93	10:28-29	164
<u>Isaiah</u>		24:10-13	143		89
11:4	152	24:10-12	151	11:43	
13:6-8	93	24:30	135	13:34-35	23, 60, 79,
66:23-24	137	24:31	90	1400	128
		24:44	31	14:2-3	68, 168
Jeremiah		24:45-46	178	14:6	112
31:3	23	25:13	97	14:6-7	150
		25:31	90	14:27	20

ı	Page	1	Page	1	Page
John (conti.)	Y ner	1:20	135	14:31	42
15:7	21	1:21	31, 135	14:33	105
15:9	167	1:21-23	31	15:53	90
15:18	58	1:24	158	15:54	91
15:20	50	1:26	158	16:13	106
15:22	58	1:26-32	159	10.10	
16:2-3	58	1:28	158	2 Corinthians	
16:3	58	2:11-15	135	4:4	52
16:8	165	5:5	66, 111	4:17	166
16:8-11	27, 110	5:6	66	5:1	91
16:13	150	5:8	66	5:14-15	22, 99
17:17	114	5:10	66	7:1	75
17.17	114	6:19	73	11:9	178
Acts		8:1	168	12:7	52
1:8	26	8:16-17	166	1.2.7	32
2:38	31	8:18	166	Galatians	
2:42	60	8:24	99	4:13	52
4:1-3	50	8:28	173	5:22-23	111
4:20	30	10:9-10	165	6:7-8	157
5:3	112	12:3-5	17	0.7-0	137
5:3-4	111	12:9	108	Ephesians	
8:1	111	12:9-10	74	1:4	164
9:1	111	12:10	> 23	1:7	111
13:48	172	12:11	61, 178	1:9	46
14:17	135	13:8	40	2:2	52
14:17	16	14:19	100		
17:4-10	28	15:1		2:8-10	20, 115-116
17:4-10	49	15:2	60, 106 61	2:13-14	20, 127
1				3:4	46
17:5-6	57	15:14	106	3:9	46
17:5-8	133	15:30	104	4:7-16	105
17:6-9	57	16:18	111	4:11-13	17
17:11	115	16:20	114	4:28	82, 83
18:1-17	60	16:25-26	46	4:30	109
18:1-18	171	10	• •	4:32	23
20:1-2	16	1 Corinthian		5:3-7	136
20:34-35	178	2:1-2	26	5:20	108
20:35	125	2:7	46	6:5-9	22
24:16	42	2:12-13	49	6:16	98
		7:4-5	72	6:18-20	173
Romans		11:1	29		
1:18	51, 75	13:1-13	67	Philippians	
1:18-32	73	13:13	67	1:6	173
1:19	135	14:3	108	2:1-2	43

	Page	†	Page		Page
Philippians (con	ti.)			1 Timothy	
2:15	114	4:3	73	1:14-15	20, 126
2:29	105	4:3-7	57	5:13	179
3:21	166	4:7	70	6:12	59
4:1	41	4:9	78	6:14	152
		4:11	179		
Colossians		4:13	97	2 Timothy	
1:5	175	4:14	85	1:10	152
1:27	46	5:6	95	2:10	166
2:2	46	5:9	142	3:12	59
2:6	29	5:11	100	3:16	46, 49, 89
2:8	43	5:13	81	4:1	152
3:4	166	5:14	180	4:2	36
3:10	164	5:18	102	4:8	152
3:22-4:1	22	5:19	108, 109	4:18	127, 174
4:3	46	5:22-23	38		ŕ
				<u>Titus</u>	
1 Thessalonians		2 Thessalonians		2:1	38
1:1	16	1:1	16	2:12-13	22
1:3	15, 22	1:3	123	2:13	152
1:5	171	1:3-5	133		
1:6	25, 80	1:6	134, 142	Hebrews	
1:6-9	22	1:7	90	2:17-18	113
2:1	171	1:10-12	133	4:9	134
2:1-12	124	1:11	132	4:14	108
2:2	57	2:2	141	4:15-16	113
2:3f	80	2:4f	127	6:11-12	178
2:3-6	57	2:8	146	10:24-25	22
2:10	35	2:9	144, 146	10:36	106, 130
2:13	45, 47, 89,	2:10	155	13:7	104
	171	2:13	162		
2:14	29, 80	2:14	168	<u>James</u>	
2:16	57	2:15	127, 178	1:14-15	73
2:18	64	3:1	115	3:1-12	109
3:1	52	3:3	52, 114, 127,	4:3	83
3:1-6	16	170			
3:5	52	3:4	127	1 Peter	
3:7	55, 64	3:6-7	127	1:2	23
3:12	63, 167	3:10	176	1:8	29

1	Page		Page		Page
1 Peter (conti.)		2 Peter		2 John	
1:22	52	1:21	49	v.7	144
2:6	18	2:9	130		
3:9	107	2:14-15	75	Jude	
3:18	99			v.14-16	93
4:12-13	61	1 John		v.21	174
4:14	129	1:5	96		
5:1	166	1:7	43	Revelation	
5:1-5	105	2:3	174	3:20	139
5:7	127	2:18	144, 146,	13:4-9	144-145
5:8	153		147	22:5	166
5:14	115	4:1	108	22:17	165
		5:4-5	21		

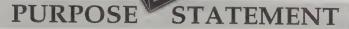
1 & 2 THESSALONIANS

SUBJECT	SCRIPTURE REFERENCE	PAGE NUMBER			
APOSTASYThe horrible act of falling away from Christ.	2 Th.2:1-3	Page 143			
 ASSURANCE Do not be like a fish out of water. Hope in heaven founded upon faith in Christ. The storm has passed over the believer. 	2 Th.2:10-12 1 Th.3:1-10 2 Th.2:1-3	Page 159-160 Page 55-56 Page 142			
BACKSLIDING (See APOSTASY; END TIMES)					
BIBLE ◆ A strong passion for <u>Bible</u> distribution.	1 Th.2:13-20	Page 47			
BLOOD (See JESUS CHRIST)					
CALL (See ELECTION)					
CHRIST JESUS (See JESUS CHRIST)					
 CHURCH Built upon a solid rock. Member participation on the front-lines. 	1 Th.1:1-4 1 Th.1:1-4	Page 19 Page 17			
DAY OF THE LORD (See ASSURANCE)					
 DECEPTION A sincere chase for a mirage. Are you living like a "sucker" or a "saint"? 	2 Th.2:10-12 2 Th.2:4-9	Page 156 Page 153			
ELECTIONShot in the heart by God's arrow of grace.	1 Th.1:1-4	Page 23			
 ENCOURAGEMENT A church where everyone is "honking" e. A primary work of the Christian believer. 	1 Th.2:1-12 1 Th.5:4-11	Page 43 Page 100			
END TIMES ■ Warning: do not become a spiritual Titanic.	2 Th.2:4-9	Page 149			
ENDURANCE • The process which produces e. SUBJECT	2 Th.1:1-5 SCRIPTURE REFERENCE	Page 130 PAGE NUMBER			
EVANGELISMEquipped to be a soul-winner.What do you fear?	1 Th.2:13-20 1 Th.2:1-12	Page 53-54 Page 36			
 FAITH A f. which stirs other believers. The fatal consequence of a wrong choice. 	1 Th.3:1-10 1 Th.3:1-10	Page 61 Page 59			

SUBJECT	SCRIPTURE REFERENCE	PAGE NUMBER
FAITHFULNESS God's f.: a tug of His presence.	2 Th.3:1-5	Page 174
FELLOWSHIP • The magnetic drawing power of Christian f.	1 Th.2:13-20	Page 52
FOCUS (See RETURN OF CHRIST)		
FOUNDATIONA failure to build upon a firm f.	2 Th.1:1-5	Page 125
GOSPELLived out in very practical ways.	1 Th.1:5-10	Page 28
 GRACE God's Riches at Christ's Expense. Receiving what you do not deserve. 	2 Th.1:1-5 2 Th.3:6-18	Page 126 Page 181
HEAVEN (See ASSURANCE)		
HOPE (See ASSURANCE; RESURRECTION)		
IDOLATRYThe charge: nail all your idols to the cross.	1 Th.1:5-10	Page 32
INTEGRITYThe critical need to keep a pure witness.	1 Th.5:12-28	Page 109
 JESUS CHRIST (See RETURN OF CHRIST) Christ: the secret to your salvation. One day: becoming just like Him. Placing your confidence in His shed blood. 	2 Th.2:13-17 1 Th.3:11-13 1 Th.4:1-8	Page 168 Page 68 Page 76
JUDGMENT • Warning: Have you discovered the Fire Escape	?2 Th.1:6-12	Page 139
LAWLESSNESSA race away from morality towards great evil.	2 Th.2:4-9	Page 150
• When Jesus returns, what will you be doing?	1 Th.5:12-28	Page 103
 LOVE (See UNITY) Hands that give "TLC" (tender-loving care). The need to be taught how to 1. 	1 Th.2:1-12 1 Th.4:9-12	Page 41 Page 79-80
OBEDIENCEDuty: know the language of ο.	2 Th.1:6-12	Page 136

	SUBJECT	SCRIPTURE REFERENCE	PAGE NUMBER	
PR •	AYER Allowing God to do what only He can do. The heating apparatus (furnace) of the church.	1 Th.1:1-4 2 Th.3:1-5	Page 21 Page 172	
RE •	SURRECTION One of the great hopes of the Christian believer	.1 Th.4:13-5:3	Page 87	
RE •	SPECT Of church leaders.	1 Th.5:12-28	Page 105	
RE •	TURN OF CHRIST Staying focused: preparing for His soon return. What will He say when He shouts? Enough!	1 Th.5:4-11 1 Th.4:13-5:3	Page 97-98 Page 89	
SA:	LVATION (See ASSURANCE; EVANGELISM The last plane out: Will you be left behind?	1: JESUS CHRIST) 2 Th.2:13-17	Page 163	
SA	NCTIFICATION Do not allow your culture to poison you.	1 Th.4:1-8	Page 73	
SIN	(See TEMPTATION)			
STRENGTH (See VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIFE)				
TE	MPTATION Do not let down your guard.	1 Th.4:1-8	Page 72	
UN •	A by-product of love.	1 Th.3:11-13	Page 67	
<u>VIC</u>	Dead to self, alive to Christ. The desire to "kick sand" in the bully's face.	1 Th.5:12-28 1 Th.2:13-20	Page 115 Page 45-46	
WITNESS-WITNESSING (See EVANGELISM; GOSPEL; INTEGRITY; LIFESTYLE)				
WORD OF GOD (See BIBLE)				
•	Embracing the right motive. Staying focused in the midst of bombshells.	1 Th.4:9-12 2 Th.3:6-18	Page 83 Page 179	





LEADERSHIP MINISTRIES WORLDWIDE

exists to equip ministers, teachers, and laymen in their understanding, preaching, and teaching of God's Word by publishing and distributing worldwide *The Preacher's Outline & Sermon BibleTM* and related *Outline* Bible materials, to reach & disciple men, women, boys, and girls for Jesus Christ.

MISSION STATEMENT

- 1. To make the Bible so understandable its truth so clear and plain that men and women everywhere, whether teacher or student, preacher or hearer, can grasp its Message and receive Jesus Christ as Savior; and...
- 2. To place the Bible in the hands of all who will preach and teach God's Holy Word, verse by verse, precept by precept, regardless of the individual's ability to purchase it.

The *Outline* Bible materials have been given to LMW for printing and especially distribution worldwide at/below cost, by those who remain anonymous. One fact, however, is as true today as it was in the time of Christ:

• The Gospel is free, but the cost of taking it is not •

LMW depends on the generous gifts of Believers with a heart for Him and a love and burden for the lost. They help pay for the printing, translating, and placing *Outline* Bible materials in the hands and hearts of those worldwide who will present God's message with clarity, authority and understanding beyond their own.

LMW was incorporated in the state of Tennessee in July 1992 and received IRS 501(c) 3 non-profit status in March 1994. LMW is an international, nondenominational mission organization. All proceeds from USA sales, along with donations from donor partners, go 100% into underwriting our translation and distribution projects of *Outline* Bible materials to preachers, church & lay leaders, and Bible students around the world.

© 1995. Leadership Ministries Worldwide



Publisher & Distributor of...

The Presched Outline & Seman Bible

Sharing the OUTLINED BIBLE with the World!



- 1. AUTO-PLAN. Your automatic monthly way to get any/all the volumes, paying as you go.
- NEW TESTAMENT, Compete in 14 volumes.
 You get a FREE Volume when you purchase the Full Set altogether, or through Auto-Plan.
- 3. OLD TESTAMENT. In process; 1 volume releases about every 6-8 months, in sequence.
- 4. THE MINISTERS HANDBOOK. Acclaimed as a "rhust-have" for every minister. Outlines more than 400 verses into topics like Power, Victory, Encouragement, Security, Restoration, plus more than 100 others. Discount for quantities.
- THE TEACHER'S OUTLINE & STUDY BIBLE.
 Verse-by-verse study & teaching; 45 minute lesson or session, Ideal for study, small groups, classes, even home schooling. Student takeaway at cost. New Testament will be 42± vols.
- CD-ROM. Fall 1995. Complete NT, Master Index, Minister's Handbook. Both Windows 3.1 & Macintosh. Includes KJV, NIV, NASB. M.Henry, J.Gill, Eastons Dictionary, Vine's & others are just some of the helpful works included on this Electronic Biblical Workshop. Outstanding!
- 7. THE OUTLINE. Quarterly newsletter to all users and owners of POSB. Complimentary.

- LMW AGENT PLAN. An exciting way any user sells OUTLINE materials & earns a second income.
- DISTRIBUTION. Our ultimate mission is to provide POSB volumes & materials to preachers, pastors, national church leaders around the world. This is especially for those unable to purchase at U.S. price. USA sales gain goes 100% to provide volumes at affordable prices within the local economy.
- TRANSLATIONS. Korean, Russian, & Spanish are shipping first volumes — a great effort and expense. Next priority: Mandarin Chinese (1996) with 6 other languages awaiting funding.
- 11. FUNDING PARTNERS. To cover the cost of all the translations, plus print, publish, and distribute around the world is a multi million dollar project. However, as thousands of partners generously respond from willing hearts, we're confident God will supply the funds and other needs.
- REFERRALS. Literally thousands (perhaps even youl) first heard of POSB from a fellow preacher, minister, or friend — Word of mouth from excited users is the way. Please tell someone Today!
- CURRICULUM & COPYRIGHT. Permission may be given to copy specific portions of POSB for special group situations. Write for details.

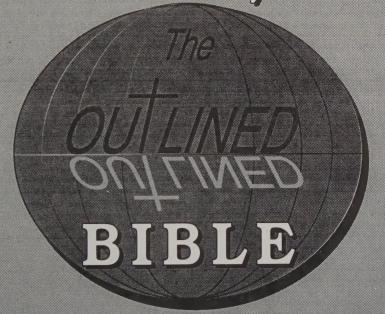


Please PRAY 1 Minute/Day for LMWI

LEADERSHIP MINISTRIES WORLDWIDE

Sharing





With the World!



7 T2-BNO-336

Leadership Ministries Worldwide

